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**Followers of Fashion: Mapping the Social
and Political Genealogy of the Literary Fop
1660-1789**

Montana Elyse Davies-Shuck

PhD

2020

**Followers of Fashion: Mapping the Social
and Political Genealogy of the Literary Fop
1660-1789**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of the University of
Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis examines the topical resonance of the popular figure of the fop in British literature of the long eighteenth century. Previous examinations of the fop cluster around the figure's first popularisation on the Restoration stage. My study, however, covers the far broader period 1660-1789 to argue that the fop's topical relevance extended far beyond the Restoration years. The study is bookended by two major events, the Restoration of the British Monarchy, and the onset of the French Revolution. These events, I suggest, were integral to the fop's initial popularization and subsequent disappearance within British culture.

The thesis adopts a long chronological approach in order to make new arguments as to the fop's significance as a figure deployed within cultural discourse to register shifting socio-political anxieties. The study investigates the ways in which the stable set of characteristics which scholars have come to associate with the fop – vanity, excess, fashionability, and Frenchness – are repurposed at key moments throughout the long eighteenth century. I argue that to fully understand the significance of the fop as a touchstone for debates on masculinity, national identity, and luxury, we must recontextualise the figure and recognize the fop's development as a character type throughout the century.

My enquiry starts by considering how issues of gender impact upon both the portrayal and reception of fops. Addressing the lack of scholarly interest that has been paid to the female fop, I argue that the figure provides an interesting counterpoint to the male fop's development as a character type. My second chapter engages with existing scholarship on the fop in the Restoration. Diverging from these studies, however, I read the fop's proliferation and popularization as a direct result of Charles II's Restoration and as registering concerns over French influences on both king and country. I argue that the fop functioned as an example of failed Stuart masculine identity. My third chapter considers how periodicalists in the early decades of the eighteenth century utilized the essay form to expose and challenge the fashionable façade of the fop and in doing so draw attention to the destabilising effect of fashion as a signifier of status. Moving towards the 1770s and 1780s, the fourth chapter considers the figure of the macaroni. Whereas previous studies conflate the macaroni and the fop, I focus on issues of sexual identity in order to assert their dissimilarities. The study concludes that the fop's demise from popular literary and political imagination coincides with the French Revolution, as the fop's defining association with French affection made the figure unsustainable within this new political context.

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Author Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the University Ethics Committee.

Name: Montana Davies-Shuck

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Date: 14/03/2021

Introduction

The figure of the fop has been consistently considered as ephemeral: a trivial figure who played a comic, but nevertheless, secondary role within the larger narrative of a play concerned with issues of marriage, inheritance, and sexual conquest. The fop is generally discussed in these terms, with a particular focus on the figure's presence on the Restoration stage. This thesis will contest the understanding of the fop as a subsidiary figure within eighteenth-century literary culture by offering an overview of the fop's prevalence within literature between the years 1660 and 1789 and suggesting the figure's topical relevance extended well beyond the stage.

The term 'fop' was deployed as early as the fifteenth century to mean "a foolish person, a fool", and while it always retained this association with foolishness, from the 1660s up until the late eighteenth century, the term took on new and specific connotations.¹ The fop of the long eighteenth century embodied a specific set of characteristics: foolishness, vanity, frivolity, effeminacy, affectation, and Frenchness. Charting the development of the fop as a distinct character in the period between Charles II's Restoration in 1660 and the onset of the French Revolution in 1789, this thesis emphasizes the stability of the fop's core characteristics in order to explore the reasons as to why the fop remained a prominent figure within the literary imagination of the long eighteenth century. I will argue that although the characteristics which define the fop remain relatively stable, the deployment of and responses to the figure at key moments throughout the century reveal the figure to be a timely reflector of changing cultural and political anxieties. This deeper exploration over a much longer period than that previously undertaken by scholars will reveal the significant function of the

¹ 'Fop, n.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 17 December 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/72746>.

fop as a tool for contesting understandings of national identity, gender identity, and the representation of status and legitimacy.

Definitions

Eighteenth-century definitions of the term ‘fop’ evoke the traits of vanity, foolishness, and affectation as essential characteristics of the figure. However, these contemporary definitions often differ in the way they frame these aspects of the fop’s character. In *The Dictionary of Love* (1753), for instance, John Cleland defines the fop as

one who has not the honour to be a coxcomb; there is not stuff enough in him to reach that character. He is extremely satisfied with his person; fancies every woman that sees him cannot help dying for him: and that he may give the poor creatures as much excuse for their fatal weakness for him as possible, (which by the bye is very good-natured) adds to his person one reason more for their liking it, in dressing irresistibly taudry, and keeps them withal in countenance, by his own example, in loving himself to distraction. He passes most of his time in ogling himself in a glass; priming his figure, and caressing his curls and toupee. He verifies that general maxim, that a thing that can do no harm, will never do much good: for, as no woman can fall to him, that is not as perfectly worthless as himself, of which the damage is not great, so may you safely defy him to make any woman happy, who deserves to be happy. Nor indeed is it in his power to marry, being properly speaking so married to himself, that it looks to him like cuckolding himself, to afford any love to any other but his own sweet person.²

Cleland’s dismissive character sketch emphasizes the ephemeral nature of the fop. Stressing the performativity of the fop, Cleland offers a comical reading of the fop’s vanity, frivolity, effeminacy, and affectation. In contrast, Samuel Johnson in his *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) still describes the same core traits of the fop but offers a much more nuanced and potentially politicized reading of the figure: “A simpleton; a coxcomb; a man of small understanding and much ostentation; a pretender; a man fond of show, dress, and flutter; an impertinent”.³ Johnson foregrounds his definition in the traditional etymology of

² John Cleland, *The Dictionary of Love. In Which Is Contained, the Explanation of Most of the Terms Used in That Language*. (Dublin, 1754).

³ Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (London: J. & P. Knapton, 1755), 832.

fop as fool. However, unlike Cleland's characterization, Johnson's definition allows room for a more sinister understanding of the fop. For Johnson, the fop's vanity is implied rather than explicit. Taken out of a narrativized representation and broken down into specific characteristics, Johnson's fop lacks the comic and harmless veneer conveyed in Cleland's definition.

Published only two years apart, these contemporaneous definitions nevertheless capture the ability of the fop to convey disparate meanings. Both Cleland and Johnson's definitions register the core characteristics of the fop (foolish, fashionable, affected, vain), yet offer different interpretations of what those characteristics can signify. It is the ability of the fop to convey such different meanings and associations that lies at the heart of this thesis. I argue that the fop's mutability as a character type makes the figure so prominent across literature of the long eighteenth century. The fop's body and person became a site for contesting ideas of national identity, luxury, and gender throughout the period, a figure whose core characteristics could be interpreted and reinterpreted in response to different situations and contexts.

As illustrated by the disparities between Cleland and Johnson's definitions, the fop had the potential to represent different things for different individuals when placed in different contexts. Yet the core characteristics which distinguish the figure remain stable throughout the century. It is accepted by modern scholars that a fop is vain, affected, effeminate, foolish, and Frenchified. Dominic Glynn, for instance, distinguishes the figure as a "laughable Francophile fop", while Rosalind Carr refers to the figure as an "effeminate fop", and Karen Harvey suggests the "fop was a vain, self-obsessed character".⁴ A modern

⁴ Dominic Glynn, "'Franglais Fops' and Mocking the French in English Restoration Theatre', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews* 31, no. 1 (2017): 20; Rosalind Carr, 'The Importance and Impossibility of Manhood: Polite and Libertine Masculinities in the Urban Eighteenth Century', in *Nine Centuries of Man: Manhood and Masculinities in Scottish History*, ed. Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Ewan

definition of the fop, however, is made complex by the need to recognize the imbalance between these traits in the figure's portrayal. That is to say, while all fops embody these traits in some form, eighteenth-century authors often emphasized and prioritized certain characteristics over others in their portrayal of specific fops.

Modern scholars have largely accepted the ephemerality of the fop, often confining the figure's relevance within the context of Restoration drama where the fop's presence was first felt. Robert Heilman for instance, identifies the Restoration as a turning point for the figure of the fop:

In the period of Restoration drama, then, a new and limited concept of the fop came into existence alongside the traditional generalized concept. The hyper-fashionable man about town, attitudinizing and often more mannered than well-mannered, a coterie type, flourishing an ostentatious with-it-ness, is set off from the rather large and amorphous society of persons who are called stupid and silly because they are so, or are thought so, or are simply displeasing to those who call them so. The vocabulary of foppism may point in either direction; if the play has a fop of the new specialized order, the words invariably point in both directions-fool in general, or new social flash in particular.⁵

The fop as fool, for Heilman, is distinct from the "hyper-fashionable man about town". Yet, Heilman recognizes that there is the potential for slippage between the two definitions.

Although Heilman focuses solely on the fop as a Restoration figure, he taps into concerns which this thesis aims to elucidate in more detail: the ability of the fop to represent a number of concerns simultaneously dependent on the context in which the figure is deployed.

A complex web of synonyms developed around the term fop in the early decades of the long eighteenth-century. This has led some scholars to suggest that the fop is sometimes difficult to classify as a distinct entity within literary culture. Mark S. Dawson, for instance, states that terms such as 'beau', 'fribble', 'pretty gentleman' and 'coxcomb' that were

(Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 72; Karen Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 301.

⁵ Robert B. Heilman, 'Some Fops and Some Versions of Foppery', *ELH* 49, no. 2 (1982): 365.

deployed alongside and sometimes in lieu of the term fop have consequently led to a “potential ambiguity of the term ‘fop’”.⁶ However, I argue that these varied terms actually speak to the fop’s function in representing divergent concerns. Contemporaries would use these alternative terms for fop in order to prioritize a certain character trait in their representation of the figure. For example, the term beau foregrounds issues of fashionability, whereas coxcomb is more strongly associated with vanity and foolishness. Beau and coxcomb can be used interchangeably with the term fop, but by using these terms instead of fop, contemporaries heightened the figure’s association with a specific foppish characteristic. The range of traits embodied by the fop therefore facilitated the emergence of this web of synonyms. While this has been perceived as a barrier to understanding the fop as something more than an ephemeral figure, I contend that it actually reveals the importance of foppish characteristics to contemporary debates. The fops of the Restoration stage differ, at their core, very little from the fops of late eighteenth-century novels. What does alter, however, is the presentation of and response to the characteristics the fop embodies.

For this reason, to define the fop and understand its function in literary culture we must situate the figure within the social context of its creation. To use Deidre Lynch’s phrase, a reader’s engagement with character is a “profoundly social experience”.⁷ Lynch’s understanding of character as a reflection of social identity and social context informs my reading of the fop as a figure used to respond to a social moment. Contemporaries recognized that there were different iterations of fops. Looking back to 1695 from the vantage point of the 1730s, Colley Cibber – a famous actor, playwright, and theatre manager – acknowledges that “the Beaux of those Days, were a quite different Cast, from the modern Stamp, and had

⁶ Mark S. Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 145–46.

⁷ Deidre Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 20.

more of the Stateliness of the Peacock in their Mien, than (which now seems to be their highest Emulation) the pert Air of a Lapwing”.⁸ Cibber is alert to the fact that while the characteristics which identify the fop may stay the same, they can generate new meanings when placed in new contexts and therefore have different associations at different moments. As someone who himself wrote fops for the stage, and indeed was notorious for fashioning himself as one (as discussed at length in chapter three), Cibber was alert to the different aspects of a fop’s character and the responses they could incite. As such, Cibber was someone who was able to manipulate foppish characteristics to suit the needs of both his plays and his own public persona.

The shifting nature of the fop, as identified by Cibber, speaks to Lynch’s theory of character: she posits that there is a noticeable shift from the “flat characters” of the early eighteenth century to “rounded characters” of later novels.⁹ As a figure present throughout this shift, the fop offers a chance to understand the development of character in more nuanced terms. ‘Character’ was not a stable term in the eighteenth century. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the earliest usage of the term as a “distinctive mark impressed, engraved, or otherwise made on a surface”, dating this meaning to the fourteenth century.¹⁰ In the eighteenth century, an alternative meaning linked character to an understanding of the inner moral worth of an individual, the “mental or moral constitution, personality”.¹¹ The shift from a term signifying external and physical traits to one which encompassed internal qualities was not straightforward. It resulted in what Lisa Freeman terms “semantic confusion” in the eighteenth century.¹² Rather than these two meanings combining, they challenged

⁸ Colley Cibber, *A Critical Edition of An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*, ed. John Maurice Evans (New York: Garland Publishers, 1987), 214.

⁹ Lynch, *The Economy of Character*, 126.

¹⁰ ‘Character, n.’, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 25 November 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30639>.

¹¹ ‘Character, n.’ in *OED Online*

¹² Lisa A. Freeman, *Character’s Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 26.

understandings of the visibility and readability of identity: authors showed concern that “the outside of a ‘character’ no longer bore any necessary or meaningful resemblance to its inside”.¹³ That is to say, the new definition of ‘character’ brought to light the disjunction between what Elaine McGirr terms “seeming and being, appearances and reality”.¹⁴ It was this disjunction between seeming and being that McGirr identifies as defining eighteenth-century presentations of character, as authors grappled with the issue of attempting to “make appearances unambiguously signify natures”.¹⁵ The development of character types was one means through which authors attempted to address this issue: by grouping certain moral and physical traits and assigning them to specific character types, authors attempted to make character legible. If individuals could easily be categorized into a group, character could be made decipherable. This process, as I will show, can be traced in the figure of the fop. The fop was easily recognizable from his appearance, the figure’s clothing and fashionable excess mark him as a fop before he has spoken a line or had chance to display any discernible behaviours. The fop’s appearance also carried with it a wealth of associations: vanity, foolishness, affectation. These characteristics, assumed from his external appearance, are then supported and enforced through the fop’s actions and behaviours.

A figure of surface on the Restoration stage, the fop nevertheless developed into a figure whose internal moral (or immoral) value was deliberated by authors. As the century progressed, responses to the fop altered as the figure was deployed in new contexts. The general characteristics which identified the figure came to be embodied in a diverse range of fops that offered individualized experiences of foppish characteristics. “Fops are not born,

¹³ Freeman, *Character's Theatre*, 22.

¹⁴ Elaine McGirr, *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1.

¹⁵ McGirr, *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age*, 2.

they are created”, Andrew Williams declares.¹⁶ This argument can be taken one step further; Williams recognizes fops are created out of a composite of characteristics, formed by and out of society’s vices, however this not only facilitates the initial creation of the character but also the character’s constant recreation. While the fop’s characteristics stay stable, shifting attitudes to these attributes allowed the fop to be continually recreated by authors in different moments throughout the eighteenth century. In other words, fops prevailed within eighteenth-century literature because they were recognizable, but by encouraging a diverse range of responses they could be aligned with the shifting concerns of the day.

The Critical Field

The incongruity of character as an expression of identity is central to this thesis. Whilst Lisa Freeman prioritizes a reading of ‘character’ as an abstract and theoretical concept, this study follows the approach of Elaine McGirr, who explores the “changing values assigned to these characters [the rake, fop, country gentleman, and cit]” in order to “piece together a clear picture of the masculine ideals and anxieties of the eighteenth century.”¹⁷ Placing the fop within a narrative of a developing eighteenth-century model of character more broadly, McGirr’s study offers a guide to understanding the relationships between character types within the period. My thesis builds on the work of McGirr and her recognition of the altering meanings ascribed to character by investigating one figure in particular – the fop. While not prolific, studies which take as their focus an individual character type have been undertaken by some scholars. In the last few decades, a renewed scholarly interest in character has facilitated a focus on the manifestation of character and how individual types spoke to their

¹⁶ Andrew P. Williams, *The Restoration Fop: Gender Boundaries and Comic Characterization in Later Seventeenth Century Drama* (Lewiston, New York: E Mellen, 1995), 41.

¹⁷ Freeman, *Character’s Theatre*; McGirr, *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age*, 20.

political and social moment. For instance, Michael Edwardes (1991) and Tillman W. Nechtman (2010) have written extensive studies on the nabob, and more recently Peter McNeil (2018) has published a monograph on the macaroni.¹⁸

The fop has also received scholarly attention of this sort: for instance, Andrew Williams's (1995) study of the Restoration fop in relation to gender and comic characterization is essential reading for anyone interested in the figure.¹⁹ It is the only book-length study which focuses solely on the fop and offers an exploration of how comedy is used to contest and challenge gender boundaries in late seventeenth-century drama. Uniting all these studies is their relatively confined chronological period of focus. The term nabob, although entering the lexicon in the early seventeenth century, is discussed by Edwardes and Nechtman with a primary focus on the term's proliferation in the final decades of the eighteenth century following the 1772 collapse of the East India Trading Company's finances. Similarly, McNeil's study of the macaroni is restricted by the short lifespan of the character type in print. A relatively fleeting, although extensively deployed character, the macaroni was popularized in the 1770s but almost completely dropped out of circulation by the end of the 1780s. Williams likewise views the fop within a restricted timeframe – but unlike the case of the macaroni, this is not because of a lack of material in other decades of the eighteenth century. Rather, Williams isolates the fop within its Restoration context to explore the first, and in some senses the most prolific, manifestations of the figure. However, although first popularized on the Restoration stage, the fop has a longevity largely unparalleled in the period. Some recent attempts have been made to address the fop's continued relevance outside of the Restoration; Martin Martinez for example, while retaining

¹⁸ Michael Edwardes, *The Nabobs at Home* (London: Constable, 1991); Tillman W. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Peter McNeil, *Pretty Gentlemen: Macaroni Men and the Eighteenth-Century Fashion World* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2018).

¹⁹ Williams, *The Restoration Fop*, 1995.

a focus on the stage, discusses how the fop tampered with “sexual, spatial and social barriers” in the mid-eighteenth century.²⁰

This thesis bridges the works of Williams and Martinez to consider the fop throughout the eighteenth century, starting with the figure’s first appearance on the Restoration stage, and following it all the way through to its presence in novels of the 1780s. This approach reveals new insights into the changing characterization of the fop. The fop’s cultural valence as an eighteenth-century character, I argue, is rooted in the figure’s longevity. As Philip Carter reminds us, “the enduring utility of the fop as a commentary on standards of manhood suggests that the type should not be treated as a response to a specific ‘crisis’ but to an on-going debate over the fortunes of manliness in polite society”.²¹ A character who embodied a wide-ranging yet specific and unchanging set of characteristics, most notably affectation, effeminacy and foreignness, the fop nevertheless poses a number of problems for scholars who attempt to view the figure in isolation. The contradictions of the fop’s character stem from attempts to look at responses to individual fops decontextualized from the figure as a continuum of ideas and characteristics. Building on Martinez’s assertion that “the fop functions as a foil against which a series of issues are appraised, a sign whose meaning alters according to the context”, I intend to reveal that the fop should no longer simply be thought of as an ephemeral by-product of the Restoration stage but as a consistent figure of cultural interest throughout the eighteenth century.²² While recognizing that responses to the fop may change dependent on the social, cultural and political moment, I will nevertheless assert the figure’s stability as a character type. It was this stability, I contend, which enabled the fop to

²⁰ Martin Martinez, ‘Male Coquettes and Fribbling Beaux: The Representation of Effeminate Fops on the Mid-Eighteenth-Century English Stage.’, *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research* (Georgia: Valdosta State University, 2000), 88.

²¹ Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2001), 139.

²² Martinez, ‘Male Coquettes and Fribbling Beaux’, 85.

operate as an ongoing touchstone for social, cultural, and political issues such as effeminacy, sexual identity, luxury consumption, and Britain's complex relationship with France.

Structure of the Thesis

Unlike recent scholarship, which attempts to situate the fop within a framework of gender and sexuality studies, my study is not confined to one specific reading of the fop. Rather, I focus on the prominence of a specific set of characteristics as embodied in the figure to facilitate a reading of how social, political and cultural factors alter the presentation and connotations of the fop over time. In order to do this, the material considered throughout the various chapters of the thesis is drawn not only from a variety of genres, but also spans the length of the eighteenth century. This enables me to offer a broader assessment of the representation of the fop, focusing on the fop's representation through particular genres (drama, the periodical, the novel) in each chapter, whilst also pointing to the interplay and dialogue across genres as diverse as engravings, pamphlets and satirical poetry. In doing so, I will reveal the significance of the fop as a figure deployed within cultural and political debate to contest understandings of identity, character, masculinity, and nationality.

The thesis will take a diachronic approach to the fop. Although the broad trajectory moves chronologically, the thesis works thematically to chart changes in specific facets of foppish behaviour across the century. The first chapter considers the cross-gendered applications of foppish characteristics throughout the eighteenth century. Focusing on the depiction of female fops within literature of the eighteenth century, I reflect upon how gender impacts upon, and changes, a reading of foppish traits. Notions of vanity, fashionability and affectation which defined the fop, also defined concepts of innate female character in the

eighteenth-century imagination.²³ The chapter draws on poetry, plays, treatises, novels and caricature to explore how the framing of foppish characteristics as feminine facilitates a reading of women as foolish and laughable, but ultimately as harmless figures who possess the ability to reform. However, while I recognize that foppish women were often portrayed as less subversive than their male counterparts, I point to instances in which they face severe criticism. In particular, I consider the ways in which the characteristics of vanity and affectation found extreme expression in the figure of the female fop. I reveal how the female fop's association with French fashionability and affectation opened her up to be sexualized in ways which are not seen in the representation of the male fop until the advent of the macaroni (discussed at length in chapter four). Indeed, the same hardening of attitudes towards foppishness can be traced in both genders. This trend, I contend, illuminates the significance of foppishness to discourses of identity, nationality, and character in the period.

The second chapter takes as its focus the Restoration stage, situating the fop within the context of Charles II's court and the proliferation of anti-French sentiment that succeeded his coronation. I examine the importance of Charles' perceived relationship with France, as expressed through his preference for French clothing, and the role this played in how the fop came to be conceptualized in the eighteenth century. The chapter positions theories of character and national identity alongside fashion studies to consider the impact and understanding of fashion as a signifier of identity. The chapter focuses predominantly on comedies of manners, including plays by George Etherege, John Vanbrugh, and William Wycherley, reading their characterizations of the fop against popular representation of anti-

²³ See: E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Chris Mounsey, *Presenting Gender: Changing Sex in Early-Modern Culture* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2001); Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations, and Responsibilities* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, Second Edition (New York and Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2006).

French sentiment. By studying the fop as an example of Stuart identity, I will offer a new interpretation of the importance of politics to the fop's characterization, showing how its formation as a distinct character type was part of a larger cultural challenge to Charles II's perceived relationship with France.

Chapter three retains its emphasis on fashion; however, it refocuses its attention onto the process of consumption. By considering the fop's role as a foil for enlightenment rationalism, it engages with the philosophical treatises of René Descartes, John Locke and David Hume, alongside the works of periodicalists such as Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Edward Ward. The chapter will explore how the fop's internal, as well as external, character came to be interminably linked with the processes of consumption. Furthermore, it will examine the ways in which authors evoked the traditional etymology of the fop, emphasizing the brain's role in the consumption of luxury in order to explain the fop's propensity towards excess. Building on this, the chapter moves on to consider how intellect, or the lack thereof, became a defining attribute of the fop which could be applied to real figures in order to challenge their self-presentation. Complicating the assumption that foolishness is innate, I investigate the example of Colley Cibber, exploring how his portrayal as intellectually inferior was used to bolster his presentation as a fop, and undermine his claims to gentility. Doing so, I will suggest, reveals the fop's usefulness as a touchstone for debates on not only luxury, but on character. I assert that periodicalists, and later Cibber himself, deploy the idea of foppishness to examine the concepts of character formation. As a figure who embodied a range of traits, the fop provided a medium to contest competing notions of character and identity.

Following the exploration of the fop as a figure deployed in debates on character and identity, chapter four turns to a consideration of sexuality. Covering the period from the century's midpoint up to the late 1770s, the chapter will explore altered connotations of

effeminacy in the latter half of the century. It considers how the term effeminacy came to be associated with sexuality, especially in the figure of the macaroni. I contend that while the fop and macaroni are distinct figures, it is through the macaroni that foppish characteristics become associated with sexual identity. While recognizing an increased portrayal of the macaroni as a homosexual identity, I nevertheless argue that the figure is not exclusively represented as such. Drawing on examples from caricature, plays and magazines, I demonstrate that the macaroni is also used to embody the sexualization of foppishness more broadly: the macaroni is characterized as a figure who engages (or attempts to engage) in sexual activity, homosexual or heterosexual. Returning to the issue of foreign influence, the chapter situates changing ideas of effeminacy and the sexualized portrayal of the macaroni within the context of the Grand Tour. By this means, I demonstrate the influence of foreign travel on the framing of effeminacy as an infection and discuss the conflation of moral and physical infection at the hands of a foreign 'other' to argue that the macaroni became a means of expressing the threat France posed to the English nation. The sexualization of the fop with the advent of the macaroni, I suggest, was driven by contemporary concerns about French attempts to emasculate the nation both morally and physically in order to facilitate a potential French invasion.

While the overarching concern of this thesis is to track how the presentation of, and response to, the fop alters throughout politically and socially turbulent moments of eighteenth-century Britain, it does not suggest that the fop has morphed into something different by the end of the period. Rather, the thesis charts a discursive process whereby the connotations of the fop's relatively stable characteristics shift in response to specific culturally charged moments and changes in political, philosophical and social conditions. In tracing these changes, I argue that the fop was not just a figure of social ridicule in the long eighteenth century but was an important cultural tool deployed to discuss and contest ideas of

identity and character. The fop was not solely a construct of comedy, but a prominent and adaptable figure deployed for broader literary, social and political critique.

Chapter One

The Female Fop

Foolishness, vanity, frivolity, affectation, and French fashionability, as I outlined in the introduction to this thesis, were the characteristics that defined the fop throughout the long eighteenth century. These traits, however, were heavily gendered and in the eighteenth-century imagination were considered feminine characteristics. Therefore, the fop signified for contemporaries a breaching of gender norms: men who adopted foppish characteristics being portrayed as effeminate and emasculated. The gendering of foppish characteristics as feminine shaped not only the eighteenth-century representation of the figure of the fop but has also impacted scholarly discussion of the figure. Discussion of the fop often draws on the figure's association with effeminacy as a cornerstone of the fop's character – yet the fop's association with effeminacy is complex. It was not just in men that foppish traits were embodied. Women in the eighteenth century could be, and indeed were, characterized as fops. The identification of women as fops complicates a simple reading of the fop as an effeminate character and provides insight into the importance of the character as a figure embodying contemporary debates.

This chapter explores the gendered characterization of foppish characteristics by first exploring their representation in women. In doing so, the chapter contends that female fops were recognisable figures in the eighteenth century. I use the gendering of foppish character traits to address the tendency of scholarship to overlook the representation of female fops in the literature of the long eighteenth century. The female fop is relegated to a footnote by Moira Casey, for instance, who argues that women can possess foppish characteristics, but they cannot be considered true fops. Tapping into debates over gendered characteristics, Casey indicates that:

Although true fops are men, certain fop characteristics can be found in female characters. Narcissa of *Love's Last Shift* and Olivia in *The Plain Dealer* are both depicted as women with foppish tendencies, and Heilman points out that Mrs Fantast in Shadwell's *Bury Fair*, Belinda in Congreve's *The Old Bachelor*, Lady Fancyfull in Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Wife*, and Emilia in Shadwell's *Sullen Lovers* could all be considered fops. Of course, the effeminization of the male fop does not apply to the female fop, nor can the process be reversed (the female fop is not "emasculinized" by her foppery).¹

Reserving the designation of "true fops" for male characters, Casey prioritizes effeminization and emasculinization as central to an understanding of foppish identities. An example of gentlemanly "breeding taken too far", for Casey the male fop exemplifies the ways in which gender, status, and luxury consumption coalesce to create the effeminate fop.² By exploring the literary representation of women as fops within the eighteenth century, this chapter contests Casey's dismissal of the female fop as subsidiary to the male fop. Refocusing attention onto the characteristics which I identified in my introduction as defining the fop – vanity, Frenchness, and affectation – I argue that women and men alike could be identified as fops because the issues the character type addressed were not gender specific. Viewing the fop in this way, opens up our reading of the fop to allow for the cross-gender application of foppish traits. Just like men, women's relationship with luxury was scrutinized throughout the century, and female consumption of French fashions posed similar sociological problems regarding understandings of British identity. Therefore, studying the female fop offers the opportunity for a greater understanding of eighteenth-century attitudes to issues of luxury consumption, foreign affectation, and vanity, by revealing the ways in which these concerns were expressed and represented within different genders.

Focusing on the application of foppish traits to female characters throughout the long eighteenth century, this chapter offers an overview of the development of foppishness across

¹ Moria E. Casey, 'The Fop "Apes and Echoes of Men": Gentlemanly Ideal and the Restoration (England: 1660-1710)', in *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. Vicki K. Janik (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 212, note 1.

² Casey, 'The Fop "Apes and Echoes of Men"', 211.

the period. Challenging the perception of foppishness as an exclusively male issue, I start with an exploration of female fops in poetry and periodicals. Following this I examine female fops alongside their male counterparts within plays, before concluding by offering a reading of Madame Duval and Mr. Lovel in Frances Burney's novel *Evelina: Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778). I will provide several case studies of what could be termed prominent and recognizable female fops within literature, and in doing so address the apparent lack of attention the female fop has received from scholars. I will posit that the absence of interest in this figure can in part be attributed to the prioritizing of its widely popular male counterpart who will be the focus of subsequent chapters within this thesis. I suggest that the female fop has been excluded from analysis as women, in general, were naturally associated with many of the characteristics which defined the fop, hence the reason why the male fop is seen as effeminate. I argue, however, that the female fop emerges when those 'natural' characteristics in women are stressed to an unusual extent. In order to redress the imbalance of scholarship between the male and female fop, I place the female fop alongside the male fop to explore the many similarities between their representation. However, I will also reveal some of the ways in which their respective gender impacts their portrayal as fops. In particular, I will reveal the ways in which the female fop's association with French fashionability was sexualized in a manner that the male fop was not until the advent of the macaroni in the 1770s, an issue which is discussed at length in chapter 4. Furthermore, I will address the synergy of foppish and feminine traits in the eighteenth-century imagination and explore its implications for the representation of female fops. I argue that to fully understand the prevalence and pertinence of the male fop to debates on gender we must look at the figure in relation to his female counterpart who embodied many of the same concerns. While maintaining that female fops are treated differently to male fops, I nevertheless trace the same characteristics and the same trajectory of hardening attitudes

towards foppish traits that the subsequent chapters will prove as evident in the portrayal of male fops. In addressing the implications of this observation for our understanding of fops, I question the ramifications of the characterization of foppishness as feminine, revealing that, as the eighteenth century progressed, perceptions of gender and gender norms played a central role in foppishness becoming increasingly subversive.

Comparisons of Female and Male Vanity in Essays and Poetry

Fops were defined as fashion-conscious, vain, prone to excess, possessive of a predilection for foreign fashions and manners, and foolish. These traits, however, were not unique to the fop, and underpinned representations of women throughout the eighteenth century. As Mary Astell attests in *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (1697): “[t]hey tax us with a long List of Faults, and Imperfections” namely “Vanity, Impertinence, Enviousness, Dissimulation, Inconstancy, &c.”.³ Innately vain and imprudent, faithless and dishonest, women were perceived as susceptible to fashionable excess, and therefore could be represented as predisposed to foppishness.

For Astell, the female’s innate predisposition towards what could be considered foppish traits, should protect them against severe censure for their behaviour. Arguing in favour of the civilizing process of mixed gender conversation, Astell suggests that vanity is a more grievous sin in men, who by nature are superior in “Wit and good Sense”:

’Tis true these Improvements are to be made only by Men, that have by Nature an improvable Stock of Wit and good Sense; For those that have it not, being unable to distinguish what is proper for their Imitation, are apt to Ape us in those Things which are the peculiar Graces and Ornaments of our Sex, and which are the immediate Objects of Sight, and need no further Reflection, or thinking. This Affectation is

³ Mary Astell, *An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex : In Which Are Inserted the Characters of a Pedant, a Squire, a Beau, a Vertuoso, a Poetaster, a City-Critick, Etc., in a Letter to a Lady* (London : Printed for A. Roper and E. Wilkinson etc., 1696), 59.

notorious in our Modern *Beaus*, who observing the Care taken by some of our Sex in setting of their Persons, without penetrating any farther into the Reasons Women have for it, or considering, that what became them, might be ridiculous in themselves, fall to licking, sprucing, and dressing their Campaign Faces, and ill contriv'd Bodies, that now, like all Foolish Imitatours, they out do the Originals, and out-powder, out-patch, and out-paint the Vainest and most extravagant of our Sex at those Follies, and are perpetually Cocking, Brustling, Twiring, and making Grimaces, as if they expected we shou'd make Addresses to 'em in a short Time.⁴

Astell acknowledges the innate failings of women in order to defend her sex against the charge of vanity. Rooting “the peculiar Graces and Ornaments of our Sex” in “Object of Sight,” Astell positions female consumption and fashionability as a thoughtless act, motivated by the senses rather than by sense. Furthermore, by contrasting female vanity against the beau, Astell is able to apply the criticism of female narcissism upon the male subject. It is in the figure of the beau, Astell suggests that vanity can be found “in full Lustre”, as the “Glass is the Oracle that resolves all his mighty doubts and scruples”.⁵

The interplay between the acquired vanity of men and the natural vanity of women is articulated in the two poems – *Mundus Muliebris: or, The Ladies Dressing Room Unlocke'd*, and *Mundus Foppensis (The World of Foppery)* – both published in 1690. Read together the poems offer opposing views of foppishness. By addressing foppish characteristics as they manifest in both men and women, these poems can, in some ways, help to explain why female fops have often been overshadowed by their male counterparts. Published five years after the death of its author Mary Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris: or, The Ladies Dressing-Room Unlocke'd* was a work of sustained satire on female consumption. It contained the poem *A Voyage to Maryland; or, the Ladies Dressing-Room* supplemented by *The Fop's Dictionary*, which linked fashionability, foppishness, and France to challenge excessive female fashionability. The voyage metaphor within the title is deployed throughout the poem and works on a number of levels. First, it is used to engage with ideas of trade voyages and the

⁴ Astell, *An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex*, 145–46.

⁵ Astell, *An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex*, 61, 69.

process of filling ships with luxury goods. Second, it speaks to a woman's journey towards marriage, with objects becoming the means through which women are prepared for marriage. Yet the poem in its cataloguing of trade and objects also places the woman within the process of commercial exchange: a man must "furnish himself with a Ship and a Woman".⁶ To win a woman, the poem suggests, the young man must purchase her. The poem offers guidance on this by providing a "Catalogue, to present him with an Enumeration of particulars, and Computation of the Charges of the Adventurer".⁷ Women, the poem indicates must be brought and seduced with fashionable items.

Evelyn deploys listing to emphasize the excess of female fashionable consumption, cataloguing the wide-ranging items including "Three *Manteaus*", "Four pair of *Bas de soy*" and, "Three Muffs of *Sable, Ermine, Grey*" that a woman deems necessary to complete her wardrobe in preparation for marriage.⁸ Moving beyond items of clothing and textile, Evelyn also accounts for a variety of fashionable objects such as "Silver Candlesticks", "A *Tea* and *Chocolate Pot*" and "Spoons of Gold".⁹ The extravagance of female fashionability is further emphasized through the acute detail ascribed to individual items:

Short under Petticoats pure fine,
Some of *Japan Stuff*, some of *Chine*,
With Knee-high Galoon bottomed,
Another quilted White and Red;
With a broad *Flanders Lace* below.¹⁰

The detailed descriptions prioritize location as a distinguishing feature of fashionable objects, highlighting the centrality and importance of global trade to female consumption. Breaking down one object into all its parts, Evelyn emphasizes extravagance on both a macro and

⁶ Mary Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris: Or, The Ladies Dressing-Room Unlock'd*, in *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator*, ed. Erin Skye Mackie (Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 1998), 589.

⁷ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, pg. 589.

⁸ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, ll. 11, 23, 42.

⁹ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, ll. 171, 228, 231.

¹⁰ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, ll. 19–22.

micro level. As Katherine Aske elucidates, “the size of the inventory becomes analogous to the wealth and status of the individual”.¹¹ It is not just the quantity that signals wealth however: the minute descriptions of the objects themselves act to reinforce the overarching impression of expense, by emphasizing the quality of the expanse of objects.

The endless listing also works on another level: it underscores the needlessness and infinite collation of fashionable objects. Despite the poem’s claim to catalogue all the necessary items to secure a wife, it also acknowledges the inevitability of its failure to do so: “If once you begin to rig them out with all their Streamers, / Nor are they ever sufficiently adorned”.¹² The journey of trade, like the woman’s journey to collect fashionable objects, is an endless cycle. As the poem’s supplementary dictionary indicates, there is constantly a plethora of new fashionable terminology to reflect the continually evolving marketplace: “with innumerable others now obsolete, and for the present out of use; but we confine our selves to those in *Vogue*”.¹³ With the continual development of new objects, there is a constant source of objects for women to accumulate. As the concluding lines of the poem attest:

But tir’d with numbers I give o’re,
arithmetic can add no more,
Thus Rigg’d the Vessel, and Equipp’d,
She is for all Adventures Shipp’d,
And Portion e’er the year goes round,
Does with her Vanity confound.¹⁴

The cataloguing of objects, as Evelyn predicted, was too large a task to complete within the confines of a poem. The more objects a woman acquires, the greater her vanity grows, perpetuating her desire to amass fashionable items. Extending the trade metaphor, the woman

¹¹ Katherine Aske, “‘Such Gaudy Tulips Raised From Dung’: Cosmetics, Disease and Morality in Jonathan Swift’s Dressing-Room Poetry”, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40, no. 4 (December 2017): 510.

¹² Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, pg. 589.

¹³ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, pg. 602.

¹⁴ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, ll. 242–247.

becomes the “Vessel” that supplied with cargo is ready for “all Adventures” that married life affords.

Despite being a largely pejorative portrayal of women’s engagement with “Baubles”, the poem allows space for alternative readings that simultaneously satirize and yet challenge presentations of female consumption by pairing female and male vanity.¹⁵

Nor is she troubled at ill fortune,
For should the bank be so importune,
To rob her of her glittering Store,
The amorous Fop will furnish more.¹⁶

Paired in this way, the consumption of fashionable objects by women becomes synergetic with male procurement. They rely on each other to endorse, encourage, and enable the other’s excessive consumption. In this instance the woman relies on the male fop for economic support, which can be read in one of two ways. Firstly, it can be read as the female fop manipulating and using the fop to facilitate her own spending. This is supported by the poem’s later categorization of the fop as one of the objects women collect, identifying him as “her new *Beau* Foppling” – italicized in the same way as other objects within the poem, the fop is represented as merely another commodity in the fashionable woman’s wardrobe.¹⁷ Alternatively, this can be interpreted as foppish men manipulating female vanity, purchasing their love with objects: “Court her in the Forms and Decencies of making Love in Fashion” the preface encourages.¹⁸ These two competing narratives run throughout the poem, and despite the hints of male complicity in encouraging female procurement of luxury, it is the women themselves who come off worse in this satire. And it is to women themselves whom Evelyn looks to affect their own reformation: it wants an “Illustrious Ladies Invention and

¹⁵ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, l. 43.

¹⁶ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, ll. 70–73.

¹⁷ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, pg. 163.

¹⁸ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, pg. 585.

Courage, to give the Law of the Mode to her own Country, and to Vindicate it from Foreign Tyranny”, the supporting *Dictionary* concludes.¹⁹

What Evelyn hints at comes into full expression in the anonymous response to her poem *Mundus Foppensis* (*The World of Foppery*). Referring to Evelyn’s poem as “a very great Piece of ill Manners [...] a Rhapsody of Rhime Doggeril as looks much more like an Inventory than a Poem”, *Mundus Foppensis* offers a rebuttal to Evelyn’s portrayal of female vanity.²⁰ Inverting Evelyn’s narrative, the poem refocuses attention on male consumption as read alongside female fashionability, taking “the offensive by attacking men and detailing the “feminization” of Restoration manhood”.²¹ “It would be the greatest Injustice upon the Earth”, the author exclaims “for the Men to think of reforming the Women before they reform themselves, who are ten times worse in all respects”.²² Articulating the differentiation between male and female vanity that would later come to full expression in Astell’s essay *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, the author of the poem presents fashion and fashionability as feminine pursuits. Women, the author suggests, are naturally “gay and gaudy” in their dress, and as such it is not for men to correct this female tendency, especially when men, in line with the altered “Humors and Fashions” of the age, adopt such extravagance themselves.²³

Documenting a large list of the follies of men, the author builds on the “inventory” style of Evelyn’s poem, to position the vanities of men alongside female fashionability. Discussing the wearing of makeup, the author exclaims:

Bless us! What’s there? ’tis something walks,
A piece of Painting, and yet speaks:

¹⁹ Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris*, pg. 602.

²⁰ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis* (1691) ; and, *The Levellers* (1745, First Edition 1703), ed. Michael S. Kimmel, Publication (Augustan Reprint Society) ; No. 248 (Los Angeles, Calif.: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1988), pg. 1.

²¹ Kimmel, 'Introduction', *Mundus Foppensis*, x.

²² Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, pg. 2.

²³ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, pg. 4.

Hard Case to blame the Ladies Washes,
When Men are come to mend their Faces.
Yet some there are such Women grown,
They cann't be by their Faces known.²⁴

The innocence of “Ladies Washes” is contrasted against the adoption of make up by men who leave themselves unrecognizable. Using “Spanish Red, and white Ceruse” to alter their appearance, men corrupt women, the poem suggests, who in order to “out-doe him paint themselves”.²⁵ The poem goes on to suggest that while “the Ladies quick adorning”, men waste the day as “Far much more time Men trifling wast,/ E'er their soft Bodies can be drest”.²⁶ Presenting men as outstripping the vanities of women, as “English Beaus may out-vie Venus,” the poem exposes the tendency to criticize women as a means of subverting attention away from male follies.²⁷ More than this, however, it frames consumption as part of “Womens innocent Vanities”.²⁸

Women, the poem suggests, are natural and innocent consumers. Male consumption however is presented as excessive and dangerous. In men, luxury is subversive: men become effeminate and homosexual – “Men kiss Men, not Women now” the poem declares; men are “not for common Conversation fit” as they “forget all Native Custome”.²⁹ The poem suggests that “the cause of men’s abandonment of masculinity may lie in the enervating effect of urban life (especially London life), the emasculating qualities of peacetime, and the influence of French culture on traditional English manliness”.³⁰ Delineating luxury as a feminine pursuit, the author defends female engagement with consumption:

Why then should these Extravagants
Make such Rhime-doggeril Complaints
Against the Ladies Dressing-Room,
And closets stor'd with rich Perfumes?

²⁴ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, ll. 66–71.

²⁵ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, ll. 75, 81.

²⁶ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, ll. 85, 93–94.

²⁷ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, l. 34.

²⁸ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, l. 49.

²⁹ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, ll. 117, 58, 174.

³⁰ Kimmel, 'Introduction', *Mundus Foppensis*, x.

[...]
They're Glories not to be deny'd
To Women, stopping there their Pride;
For such a Pride has nothing ill,
But only makes them more genteel.
Should Nature these fine Toys produce,
And Women be debarr'd the use?³¹

It is only when embodied by men that these traits become dangerous the author suggests. In women, a focus on fashion and appearance heightens their gentility. In men, it undermines their very identity as they are “no Masculine Delights”.³² In other words, female vanity is natural and therefore laughable; in men it is dangerous. As the concluding lines of the poem make clear, vanity in men leaves them “Bewailing Poverty, and Folly”.³³ The poem therefore, advocates for men to assess and recognize their own follies before condemning women. Configuring female vanity as innate, the author deflects criticism away from women and refocuses it on men who should know better. For the author, expressions of female vanity are comical, male vanity on the other hand is dangerous.

Joseph Addison further expounds the association between female and male vanity in relation to consumption by deploying analogous language in his portrayal of women and fops. In *The Tatler No.151* (25 March, 1710), Addison presents women as manipulative and shrewd consumers of fashion, which is distinct from his later representation of the mindless consumption of the male fop in *The Spectator No.275*, which famously explores *The Dissection of the Beau's Brain* (15 January, 1712).³⁴ Women, he suggests in his *Tatler* essay, are constructed out of fashionable items: “Were the Minds of the Sex laid open, we should find the chief Idea in one to be a Tippet, in another a Muff, in a third a Fan, and in a fourth a Fardingal”.³⁵ Addison later reworks this representation of female consumption in *The*

³¹ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, ll. 182–185, 193–198.

³² Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, l. 199.

³³ Anon, *Mundus Foppensis*, l. 224.

³⁴ This particular *Spectator* essay is discussed further in Chapter 3.

³⁵ Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, *The Tatler*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 350.

Dissection of the Beau's Brain, in which he extends his exploration of the relationship between luxury and the effect upon the male body.³⁶ Yet, despite the resemblance between these depictions, Richard Steele attests in *The Tatler No.266* (19 December, 1710) that “one or two Fop Women shall not make a Balance for the Crowds of Coxcombs among our selves, diversified according to the different Pursuits of Pleasure and Business”.³⁷ Steele agrees with Astell in this instance, as he suggests that men are committing a more grievous sin than their female counterparts because male fops do not have the defence that excess and vanity are natural characteristics of their gender. Therefore, while Addison and Steele recognize the relationship between foppishness and female displays of vanity, foppishness in women is presented as a lesser sin than it is in men. That is not to say, however, that Addison and Steele did not highlight the hazards of excessive female vanity and consumption.

Addison in *The Spectator No.45* (21 April, 1711) registers the concern that female fops risked sexual impropriety. Concerned with the impact of foreign importations on English manners and morals, Addison calls for “an Act of Parliament for Prohibiting the Importation of French Fopperies”.³⁸ Of particular concern for Addison is that foppery and coquetry go hand in hand:

The Female Inhabitants of our Island have already received very strong Impressions from this ludicrous Nation, tho' by the Length of the War (as there is no Evil which has not some Good attending it) they are pretty well worn out and forgotten. I remember the time when some of our well-bred Country-Women kept their Valet de Chambre, because, forsooth, a Man was much more handy about them than one of their own Sex. I myself have seen one of these Male Abigails tripping about the Room with a Looking-glass in his Hand, and combing his Lady's Hair a whole Morning together. Whether or no there was any Truth in the Story of a Lady's being got with Child by one of these her Handmaids I cannot tell, but I think at present the whole Race of them is extinct in our own Country.

³⁶ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of *The Dissection of the Beau's Brain*.

³⁷ Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 342–43.

³⁸ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 192.

About the Time that several of our Sex were taken into this kind of Service, the Ladies likewise brought up the Fashion of receiving Visits in their Beds. It was then look'd upon as a piece of Ill Breeding, for a Woman to refuse to see a Man, because she was not stirring; and a Porter would have been thought unfit for his Place, that could have made so awkward an Excuse.³⁹

French importations, Addison suggests, has encouraged foppery and coquetry within women. The adoption of French fashions encouraged impropriety and immodesty in female behaviour. Playing on eighteenth-century understandings of gender, Addison suggests that women are natural predisposed to foppery and coquetry due to the “Gaiety and Airiness of Temper, which are natural to most of the Sex”.⁴⁰ Women’s propensity towards gaiety is a facet of female character, however, that Addison argues needs to be monitored in order to “keep this Sprightliness from degenerating into Levity”.⁴¹ English women are at risk of becoming too much like their French counterparts. The adoption of French fashions ultimately results in the imitation of French manners as well – manners that Addison deems incongruent with English ideals of femininity:

the whole Discourse and Behaviour of the French is to make the Sex more Fantastical, or (as they are pleased to term it,) more awakened, than is consistent either with Virtue or Discretion. To speak Loud in Publick Assemblies, to let every one hear you talk of Things that should only be mentioned in Private or in Whisper, are looked upon as Parts of a refined Education. At the same time, a Blush is unfashionable, and Silence more ill-bred than any thing that can be spoken. In short, Discretion and Modesty, which in all other Ages and Countries have been regarded as the greatest Ornaments of the Fair Sex, are considered as the Ingredients of narrow Conversation, and Family Behaviour.⁴²

Encouraging vulgarity rather than decorum and polite manners, the importation of French fashions and manners is presented by Addison as a detriment to society. Women are at risk of becoming both foppish and sexualized through their adoption of French fashions, a trend that Addison recognizes as spreading among the female populace. It was not only those who had themselves been to Paris who were impacted: Addison recalls that he knows “a Woman that

³⁹ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 192.

⁴⁰ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 193.

⁴¹ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 193.

⁴² Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 193–94.

never was out of the Parish of St. James's" who nevertheless "betray[s] as many Foreign Fopperies in her Carriage, as she could have Gleaned up in half the Countries of Europe".⁴³ The implication is that women are particularly susceptible to the whims of fashion. Moreover, Addison reveals that foppishness in women has ramifications for their virtue, as the adoption of foreign fashion is a gateway to foreign vices and immorality.

Addison further draws the reader's attention to the relationship between foppishness and sexual impropriety by following his dissection of the beau's brain with a second paper that examined a coquette's heart. *The Dissection of a Coquettes Heart* first appeared in *The Spectator* No.281 on Tuesday 22nd January 1712, one week after the publication of Addison's essay on the beau.⁴⁴ Both essays draw on luxury as a signifier of identity, but whereas with the beau the brain is the focus, with the coquette Addison discusses the heart. In doing so, he opens up the coquette to romantic scrutiny. The "thin reddish liquor" that makes up part of the coquette's hearts outer casing is recorded as rising "at the approach of a plume of feathers, an embroidered coat, or a pair of fringed gloves; and that it fell as soon as an ill-shaped periwig, a clumsy pair of shoes, or an unfashionable coat came into his house".⁴⁵ The coquette values fashionability more so than a gentleman's character. Just like the beau, she is governed solely by the eye:

several of those little Nerves in the Heart which are affected by the Sentiments of Love, Hatred, and other Passions, did not descend to this [heart] before us from the Brain, but from the Muscles which lie about the Eye.⁴⁶

⁴³ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 195.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of *The Dissection of a Beau's Brain*.

⁴⁵ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 595.

⁴⁶ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2: 596.

The coquette's preference for luxury items is disconnected from any judgment or reason, corrupting her heart as it becomes "stuffed with innumerable sorts of Trifles", trifles which, Addison indicates, consume her affections.⁴⁷

Addison suggests that the coquette's heart is made impenetrable by the luxury goods that make up her body. Exposing the disconnect between the coquette's behaviour and declarations of love, with the corporeal findings of the dissection, Addison queries the true intentions of the coquette.

We were informed that the Lady of this Heart, when living, received the Addresses of several who made Love to her, and did not only give each of them Encouragement, but made everyone she conversed with believe that she regarded him with an Eye of Kindness; for which Reason we expected to have seen the Impression of Multitudes of Faces among the several Plaits and Foldings of the Heart; but to our great Surprise not a single Print of this nature discovered it self till we came into the very Core and Center of it.⁴⁸

The coquette is presented as manipulating gentleman callers by encouraging and professing an affection she did not possess. The lack of "Faces" in her heart, is used as evidence by Addison that the coquette is superficial and insincere. She performed affection but harboured no real intention of marrying her lovers. However, in the centre of the heart Addison records that they do find a small impression of one individual:

observed a little Figure, which, upon applying our Glasses to it, appeared dressed in a very Fantastic manner [...] the little Idol which was thus lodged in the very Middle of the Heart was the Deceased Beau, whose Head I gave some Account of in my last *Tuesday's* paper.⁴⁹

Only the beau, who is himself constructed out of luxury items, can find a small place in the coquette's heart. Drawing the two characters together, Addison reveals their similarities as individuals consumed by luxury. However, despite these similarities, Tita Chico observes that Addison's characterization of the coquette is "sharper" because while the "beau may be

⁴⁷ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2: 596.

⁴⁸ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2: 596.

⁴⁹ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2: 596.

selfish and foolish [...] the coquette threatens the economy of sexual relations and patriarchal authority by refusing to subject herself to its rules”.⁵⁰ By favouring the accumulation of luxury to the fostering of relationships with gentlemen, the coquette fails to uphold societal expectations of the female’s role to marry. The importance of marriage narratives to the representation of eighteenth-century women cannot be understated. Women were expected to marry, and the female fop was often presented as complicating this narrative through her overzealous engagement with fashion, imprudent affections, and her sometimes errant morality. Accordingly, the marriage plot became an important tool in representations of female fops, particularly on the stage.

Marriage A-la Mode: French Fashionability and the Marriage Plot

Much like the male fop who is most strongly associated with Restoration comedies of manners, it was on the stage where the female fop’s fashionable excess was most strikingly conveyed and contested.⁵¹ Given the epithet of “Affected Lady”, Melantha from John Dryden’s *Marriage A-la Mode* (1673) has been characterized by critics as the definitive example of a female fop. Robert Heilman, for instance, calls her “a rather charming Francophile female fop who was to have several interesting successors”.⁵² While the play itself does not explicitly use the word fop in its description of Melantha, the conscious language choice deployed by Dryden engages with a lexicon and characterization specifically associated with foppishness.

RHODOPHIL

No lady can be so curious of a new fashion, as she is of a new French word. She's the very mint of the nation; and

⁵⁰ Tita Chico, *The Experimental Imagination: Literary Knowledge and Science in the British Enlightenment*. (Stanford [California]: Stanford University Press, 2018), 67.

⁵¹ The fop in relation to performance and fashionability on the Restoration stage is discussed at length in Chapter 2.

⁵² Robert B. Heilman, ‘Some Fops and Some Versions of Foppery’, *ELH* 49, no. 2 (1982): 367.

as fast as any bullion comes out of France, coins it immediately into our language.⁵³

Rhodophil aligns his mistress Melantha's fashionability explicitly with her engagement of French language. The description conflates the idea of commercial exchange and identity, positioning fashionability as a commodity. Melantha is represented as the "mint" of the nation, using French "bullions" (the gold or silver used to make coins) and adopting them into the English language. By aligning the importation of language with coins, Dryden likens the adoption of French language to a process of commercial exchange, with language possessing a cultural and fashionable currency that Melantha tries to cash in on.

The relationship between commerce and foppishness is central to depictions of fops of both genders throughout the eighteenth century. In depictions of women, in particular, this relationship becomes prominent as an expression of not just female vanity but female misunderstanding of commercial exchange. Prone to mis-reading value, women are repeatedly presented within a narrative which positions them as un-informed consumers of fashion. Melantha is provided regularly with a new list of French words with which to pepper her speech. In one scene we see her learning these new words with the help of her maid Philotis:

MELANTHA

O, my Venus! Fourteen or fifteen words to serve me a whole day! Let me die, at this rate I cannot last till night. Come, read your words: twenty to one half of them will not pass muster neither.

[...]

PHILOTIS

Foible, chagrin, grimace, embarrasse, double entendre, équivoque, éclaircissement, suite, bévüe, façon, penchant, coup d'étourdi, and ridicule.

⁵³ John Dryden, *Marriage A-La Mode*, ed. David Crane (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003), 1:1: 196-199.

MELANTHA

Hold, hold. How did they begin?

PHILOTIS

They began at *sottises*, and ended *en ridicule*.

MELANTHA

Now give me your paper in my hand, and hold you my glass while I practise my postures for the day.

(MELANTHA *laughs in the glass*)

How does that laugh become my face?

PHILOTIS

Sovereignly well, Madam.

MELANTHA

Sovereignly! Let me die, that's not amiss. That word shall not be yours; I'll invent it and bring it up myself. My new *point gorget* shall be yours upon't. Not a word of the word, I charge you.

[...]

PHILOTIS

'Tis so *languissant*.

MELANTHA

Languissant! That word shall be mine too, and my last Indian-gown thine for it.⁵⁴

For Melantha, the “purchasing [of] French words” become a means through which she can pursue “upward mobility”.⁵⁵ She collects and curates language like pieces of fashionable clothing, ready to be worn (or spoken) as a sign of her status. Years later in 1775, Richard Sheridan built on the idea of language as a medium through which women attempted to control their self-presentation in his play *The Rivals*. In many ways Mrs Malaprop mirrors her predecessor Melantha: both can be characterized as foppish as they demonstrate a misunderstanding and misapplication of language. While Melantha’s linguistic errors focus on her appropriation of French words, however, Mrs Malaprop’s blunders are predominantly

⁵⁴ Dryden, *Marriage A-La Mode*, 3:1: 201-204, 213–25, 228–30.

⁵⁵ Thomas Alan King, *The Gendering of Men, 1600-1750* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 183.

English: in one rather ripe instance she exclaims: “Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!”.⁵⁶ Mrs Malaprop’s attempts to elevate her language exposes her to ridicule as her malapropisms reveal her ignorance.⁵⁷ Both Melantha and Mrs Malaprop recognize the importance of language as a medium for advancing a particular version of an elite and educated self, but unfortunately neither is successful in their attempts to harness language’s power as a signification of status. As will be evidenced in subsequent chapters, the misapplication of language was not a gender specific trait but also manifests itself in male fops including the likes of Sir Fopling Flutter, who is often presented as mispronouncing French words. What distinguishes the female fops of Melantha and Mrs Malaprop from their male counterparts, however, is their heavy reliance on language. Male fops, such as Sir Fopling Flutter, use French phrases and fashionable terminology such as “Barroy” and “Chedreux” to present a fashionable and French façade, as I discuss at length in chapter two.⁵⁸ However, in the examples of Melantha and Mrs Malaprop language is introduced as a primary mode through which they attempt to socially climb. Language for these female fops is not solely about fashionability, but rather is consciously adopted as a means of elevating themselves by presenting an educated and elite identity.

In this sense, Dryden gives Melantha an agency to attempt to create and control her own identity. Edward Burns suggests that fashion for Melantha is “a strategy” through which she is “self-made”; that is to say she uses fashion as a means to create an identity.⁵⁹ Yet, fashion serves a subsidiary role to language for Melantha, who exchanges expensive clothing including an “Indian-gown” for the exclusive use of French words such as “Languissant”. Exchanging clothing for language, Melantha’s commercial power is limited to the

⁵⁶ Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals*, ed. Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 3:3: 71-73.

⁵⁷ Corrections of Mrs Malaprop’s malapropisms: 'apprehend', 'vernacular', 'arrangement', 'epithets'.

⁵⁸ The comedic effect of Sir Fopling's use of French phrases is discussed at length in Chapter 2.

⁵⁹ Edward Burns, *Restoration Comedy: Crises of Desire and Identity* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 178.

fashionable sphere. She offers no money, instead assessing the items' worth based on their perceived social value. Operating within a solely fashionable economy, Melantha adopts a foppish kind of sociability which prioritizes performance and display over substance, valuing signs of social status over monetary value. It is this incorrect estimation of value which distinguishes Melantha as foppish. Philotis acknowledges that Melantha's collation of fashionable phrases descends from something that is merely "sottises"/silly, into something "en ridicule"/ridiculous. Melantha is ridiculous because she misunderstands the process of commercial exchange as she gives away more than she gains. Therefore, while Dryden gives Melantha some agency by allowing her to engage in the process of commercial exchange, he simultaneously undermines Melantha's access to this resource by exposing her failure to successfully fashion herself as genteel.

The configuration of Melantha's identity as tied up in notions of not just commerce, but a principally French sense of fashionability, facilitates a reading of her as a fop. Colley Cibber certainly identified Melantha as such:

Melantha is as finish'd an Impertinent, as ever flutter'd a Drawing-Room, and seems to contain the most compleat System of Female Foppery, that could possibly be crowded into the tortur'd Form of a Fine Lady. Her Language, Dress, Motion, Manners, Soul, and Body, are in a continual Hurry to be something more, than is necessary, or commendable.⁶⁰

For Cibber, it is not only Melantha's collection and affectation of French language which identifies her as a fop, but her "continual Hurry to be something more". Although women were expected to elevate their own and their family's status by obtaining advantageous marriages and maintaining friendships with those from a higher social echelon, they were also expected to know their place.

MELANTHA

Dear, my dear, pity me. I am so *chagrin* today, and have

⁶⁰ Colley Cibber, *A Critical Edition of An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*, ed. John Maurice Evans (New York: Garland Publishers, 1987), 99.

had the most signal *affront* at court! I went this afternoon to do my *devoir* to Princess Amalthea, found her, conversed with her, and helped to make her court some half an hour; after which she went to take the air, chose out two ladies to go with her that came in after me, and left me most barbarously behind her.

ARTEMIS

You are the less to be pitied, Melantha, because you subject yourself to these affronts by coming perpetually to court, where you have no business nor employment.

MELANTHA

I declare, I had rather of the two, be *raillied*, nay *mal traitée* at court than be deified in the town: for assuredly nothing can be so *ridicule* as a mere town-lady.⁶¹

Melantha is consistently represented as misunderstanding the rules that govern social and fashionable life. Her quest to be fashionable is improper because she imposes and demands access to spaces that she is not welcome in, nor does she have reason to be in. A “lady from the town who tries to imitate what her social superiors do – or what she thinks they do” according to Gesa Stedman, distinguishes the female fop.⁶² As a “town-lady”, Melantha’s imposition on the court is deemed inappropriate by those around her. Regardless of this, Melantha continually attempts to imitate the court ladies and force her company upon them, and she fails to recognize or acknowledge the impropriety of her behaviour.

Through her imposition on the court, and her efforts to purchase access to the court through her adoption of French language, Melantha is represented as a fop. For Dryden, however, with the guidance of a man, Melantha can be reformed of her foppishness. Palamede recognizes Melantha’s reliance on French language as an affected and yet integral part of the fashionable identity she is attempting to cultivate. This allows Palamede to

⁶¹ Dryden, *Marriage A-La Mode*, 3.1: 96-108.

⁶² Gesa Stedman, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century France and England* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 143.

simultaneously challenge Melantha's pretensions and yet win her favour by adopting the very language she uses to fashion herself.

MELANTHA

(cries)

A d'autres, à d'autres. He mocks himself of me, he abuses me: ah me unfortunate!

[...]

PALAMEDE

No, I will hear no conditions! I am resolved to win you *en français*, to be very airy, with abundance of noise, and no sense. Fa, la, la, la, &c.⁶³

In order to win Melantha's consent to marriage, Palamede must himself become "en français", and thus become a fop. He is able to win Melantha over because he gives her use of fashionable language credibility. By adopting French smatterings, and imitating Melantha's pretensions, Palamede gives impetus to Melantha's belief of her own fashionable influence. But in doing so, he also challenges the type of fashionable identity Melantha is attempting to adopt. He reveals the affected and false nature of such fashionable language through his ability to adopt and discard it at his pleasure.

By the conclusion of the play Melantha secures a marriage to Palamede, who understands that Melantha's folly lies in her claiming access to a space she is not socially a part of:

MELANTHA

True, my dear, when he was a private man he was a *figure*; but since he is a king, methinks he has assumed another *figure*. He looks so *grand*, and so *auguste*. (*going to the king*)

PALAMEDE

Stay, stay; I'll present you when it is more convenient.

[*aside*]

I find I must get her a place at court; and when she is once there, she can be no longer ridiculous; for she is

⁶³ Dryden, *Marriage A-La Mode*, 5.1: 145-146, 177-79.

young enough, and pretty enough, and fool enough, and French enough, to bring up a fashion there to be affected.⁶⁴ Palamede suggests that by procuring Melantha an official position she will be accepted and come back into line with social propriety. It is not her person that makes her foppish, then, but rather her breach of social protocols. Indeed, Palamede notes that her qualities make her very much suited to the court as she is young, pretty, and fashionable. It is through marriage, therefore, that Melantha achieves her legitimacy. As Thomas Alan King elucidates: “[i]f Melantha’s foppishness is her residual desire for access to the sovereign body, if she claims the favour of being recognised by the gaze, she is tamed – and gendered – when the conditions of her visibility and access to the court are set by her fiancé, Palamede”.⁶⁵ While attempting to socially climb Melantha is perceived as foppish, yet, through marriage, she gains a legitimacy which tempers the foppishness of her actions and fashionability. Female performance of fashionability is acceptable, the play suggests, when the individual has the social position to back it up. The narrative of legitimacy, which is discussed at length in relation to Charles II in Chapter Two, is therefore central to depictions of male and female fops. The fop irrespective of gender was a character used to contest the stability of traditional signifiers of identity such as clothing. Yet, Melantha exposes the ways in which questions over legitimacy can be successfully addressed and contested in the female fop in ways not open to the male fop. Through marriage, the female fop is provided with the opportunity to claim legitimacy, to assert her identity, and return to the folds of social acceptability. Without a title Melantha is not deemed appropriate company and her persistent attempts to insert herself into the folds of court life are viewed as a nuisance. Yet, with the legitimacy conferred on her through marriage, she is able to assimilate into court life. This eventual acceptance into the upper echelons of society distinguishes Melantha from her contemporary male fops.

⁶⁴ Dryden, *Marriage A-La Mode*, 5.1: 501-508.

⁶⁵ King, *The Gendering of Men*, 183.

Characters such as Lord Foppington – the luxuriant fop of John Vanbrugh’s 1696 play *The Relapse, or, Virtue in Danger* – are able to buy their titles, yet they remain on the outskirts of social acceptability, granted access but never fully accepted they remain figures to be ridiculed. In contrast, the female fop is able to elevate herself through marriage and become a member of the fashionable court circle. Or, in other words, Melantha is able to shake off the character of a fop through the legitimising impact of marriage.

Representations of Male and Female Fops on the Stage

The ability of female fops to fall back in line with social propriety, as seen in the case of Melantha, can in part explain the tendency to overlook female fops within plays. For instance, in Cibber’s *Love’s Last Shift* (1696) the obvious fop of the play is Sir Novelty Fashion. Yet, he is not the only foppish figure in the play: he has a female counterpart in the character of Narcissa. In the same way that Sir Novelty is immediately identifiable by his name, Narcissa’s name evokes her vanity. The foppish parallels between these two figures are constantly brought to the fore of Cibber’s play through their doubling. They are represented in situations where their vanity is pitted against each other as they fish for compliments and approval. Jealous of the attention Hillaria receives from the male company, Narcissa resorts to complimenting Sir Novelty in order to gain his attention. She flatters:

[you] Sir Novelty, are a true Original, the very Pink
of Fashion; I’ll warrant you there’s not a
Milliner in Town but has got an Estate by [you.]⁶⁶

However, she is unsuccessful in her attempts to gain flattery in return. When Narcissa proposes that Sir Novelty and Young Worthy should compete for her love by making

⁶⁶ Colley Cibber, *Love’s Last Shift*, in *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*, ed. David Womersley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 2:1: 58-60.

proclamations about their passion for her, she is disappointed. Sir Novelty offers extensive reasons in support of himself without one mention of Narcissa:

In short, Madam, the Cravat-string, the
Garter, the Sword-knot, the Centurine, the
Bardash, the Steinkirk, the large Button, the
long Sleeve, the Plume, and full Peruque,
were all created, cry'd down, or revived by
me: In a word, Madam, there has never been
any thing particularly taking or agreeable for
these ten Years past, but your humble Servant
was the Author of it.⁶⁷

Speaking extensively of his reputation as a man of fashion, Sir Novelty proclaims, "I think 'tis sufficient, if I tell a Lady / why she shou'd love".⁶⁸ Narcissa is of course incensed at this, exclaiming "Hang him! he's too conceited; he's so in love/ with himself, he wont allow a Woman the bare / Comfort of a cold Compliment".⁶⁹ Unable to satisfy her vanity, Narcissa vilifies the trait in her fellow fop, oblivious to her own hypocrisy.

While Sir Novelty's vanity could be perceived as exceeding and overshadowing Narcissa's, this does not diminish her own claims to foppishness. Not only does she embody vanity, but her disregard for English manners and fashion align her with the fop. In a conversation between Narcissa and Elder Worthy, Cibber sets up the contrasting image of masculine English identity against the foppish, foreign vanity of Narcissa:

Narcissa
I vow it's very fine, considering what dull
Souls our Nation are; I find 'tis an harder
matter to reform their Manners, than their
Government or Religion.

Elder Worthy
Since the one has been so happily
accomplish'd, I know no reason why we
should despair of the other; I hope in a little

⁶⁷ Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, 2:1: 335-343.

⁶⁸ Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, 2:1: 393-394.

⁶⁹ Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, 2:1: 395-397.

time to see our Youth return from Travel big
with Praises of their own Country.⁷⁰
Engaging with a number of concerns – vanity, the Grand Tour, national loyalty, and manners – Cibber positions Narcissa as an example of foreign ideas. She is one of the “Youth” that Elder Worthy criticizes for lacking “Praise” for England. Despite his optimistic outlook, Elder Worthy in this instance emphasizes Narcissa’s foppishness, as he responds to Narcissa’s inability to recognize the value of English identity. Narcissa may not be on the same level as Sir Novelty Fashion, but she is nevertheless represented as a fop.

One play which was more overt in its representation of female fops was *The Female Fop; or The False One Fitted*. First performed in 1724, the play grapples with issues of both male and female foppishness, testing the boundaries of social as well as gender identity through a focus on a marriage plot.⁷¹ Written by Mr Sandford, the comedy follows the cousins Manilia and Clarinda as they become entangled in love triangles. Described as “a wild young Hussey” and an inconstant, Manilia is constantly contrasted to her virtuous and loyal cousin Clarinda.⁷² The pairing of virtuous and foppish, or morally dubious, female characters is a common trope of drama throughout the eighteenth century. Pairing women in this way, playwrights were able to negotiate and challenge concepts of innate character traits. While Manilia indulges her natural foppish vanities, her cousin represents the ideal virtuous female, who learns to manage her feminine faults. Manilia is extravagant in dress, unabashedly displays a desire to socially climb, and most tellingly is duped by those around her. In contrast, Clarinda is an obedient daughter who still maintains her own sense of

⁷⁰ Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, 3:2: 113-121.

⁷¹ Mr. Sandford, *The Female Fop: Or, the False One Fitted. A Comedy. As It Is Acted at the New Theatre over-against the Opera-House in the Hay-Market*. (London : printed for Tho. Butler, next Bernard's-Inn in Holborne; and Tho. Payne, at the Crown near Stationers-Hall, 1724). The play was performed just 3 times in the period.

⁷² Mr. Sandford, *The Female Fop*, 23.

identity: while recognizing her “Women’s Weakness” she shows intelligence and social awareness that allows her to eventually marry the one she loves.⁷³

On the other hand, Manilia shows inconstancy which opens her up to charges of vanity and social pretensions. Promising to marry the worthy Mr Trueman, Manilia soon recants on her preference for the gentleman in favour of Sir Levity Modish. In an exchange between the two cousins the respective views of both are exposed:

Clarinda: But then denying your self culpable in forsaking a Man of Merit for a very Fop, is such an Extravagance –

Manilia: Why really now, my Dear, I cant perceive where the great Extravagance lies in making my self a Lady

Clarinda: Intollerable!

Manilia: Envy, mere Envy, o’my Word, Cousin; That I love the Fellow is past dispute, and if so, Why I should sacrifice my own for the Sake of another’s Quiet, I must confess I see no Reason; Self-Preservation, my Dear, is the first Law of Nature; besides, as to his Estate, Clarinda, O there are a thousand Charms in a plentiful Estate, not a little indearing [sic] to Woman of my distinguishing Capacity.⁷⁴

Through her speech, Manilia reveals her frivolous fancies, prioritizing status and wealth above all else. She goes on to directly admonish Trueman for finding fault in her actions, stating:

Sir, I have ever made it a Maxim, he who bids highest shall e’en take me – and I fancy, Sir, was you to weigh the vast Quantity of Love you boast of, against Sir Levity’s Estate, your Scale wou’d be very light, Mr. *Trueman*.⁷⁵

Not only does this reveal Manilia’s pretensions, but she further dismisses Trueman’s anguish in terms which draw on an established foppish rhetoric surrounding appearance. She declares: “but why this Passion, Mr. Trueman? – trust me, Sir, ’tis the worst Thing in the World for the Complexion”.⁷⁶ Unlike her cousin who is motivated by love, Manilia’s prioritizing of luxury, money, status and appearance exposes her natural vanity. Rather than the honest love of

⁷³ Mr. Sandford, *The Female Fop*, 17.

⁷⁴ Mr. Sandford, *The Female Fop*, Act 3, Scene 1, 38-39.

⁷⁵ Mr. Sandford, *The Female Fop*, Act 4, Scene 1, 63.

⁷⁶ Mr. Sandford, *The Female Fop*, Act 4, Scene 1, 65.

Trueman, she is seduced by Sir Levity Modish, a fop who performs an exaggerated fashionability which mirrors her own.

The fear that women would be drawn to their mirror image in the male fop was a prominent concern for eighteenth-century authors across genres. Erin Mackie identifies this concept as “pathological identity-mirroring”, arguing that females engaged in a “narcissitic desire” whereby they were attracted to male fops “based on their similarity rather than their differences”.⁷⁷ In *The Tatler*, No. 151 (25 March, 1710) Addison laments the vanity of women, who he suggests would choose a man for his clothes rather than his character: “A sincere Heart has not made half so many Conquests as an open Wastcoat; and I should be glad to see an able Head make so good a Figure in a Woman’s Company as a Pair of Red Heels”.⁷⁸ Drawn to “every Thing that is showy” women, Addison suggests, can be seduced by the extravagance of foppish dress, and as a result choose their husbands unwisely.⁷⁹ This concept is realized in the character of Manilia, who chooses the “brisk, airy, foppish, impudent” Sir Levity Modish over the gentleman Mr. Trueman.⁸⁰ Manilia’s imprudent decision is eventually resolved through the comedy’s climatic closing scenes as Sir Levity Modish is revealed to be Trueman’s missing sister, Eudemia, in disguise.⁸¹ Eudemia reveals that her deceit was primarily motivated by a desire to expose Manilia’s imprudence and vanity. In doing so, Eudemia challenges Manilia’s foppery while also enabling Manilia to redeem herself by recognizing her folly and returning the affection of Trueman.

⁷⁷ Erin Skye Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator* (Boston: Bedford/StMartin’s, 1998), 187.

⁷⁸ Steele and Addison, *Tatler*, 2: 350.

⁷⁹ Steele and Addison, *Tatler*, 2: 349.

⁸⁰ Mr. Sandford, *The Female Fop*, Act 4, Scene 1, 68.

⁸¹ Revelation scenes of this kind became an established dramatic technique during this period. Colley Cibber also deploys this trope in his play *The Lady’s Last Stake* (1747), in which Sir John Conquest is revealed to actually be Mrs Conquest in disguise.

The need to challenge the foppish tendency of women, and teach them the value of a true gentlemen, is a trope also explored in detail in David Garrick's *Miss in her Teens; or, The Medley of Lovers. A Farce* (1747). The Miss of the title is Biddy, a young girl who is courted by a number of male characters, including the gentleman Captain Loveit and the fop Fribble. Biddy frames her attraction to, and engagement with, Fribble in fashionable terms, concluding he is "[q]uite another sort of man," one who "wears nice white gloves and tells me what ribbons become my complexion, where to stick my patches, who is the best milliner, where they sell the best tea, and which is the best wash for the face and the best paste for the hands. He's always playing with my fan and showing his teeth".⁸² Miss Biddy finds this show of fashionability endearing, as Fribble endorses and supports her own sense of fashionable identity. Yet, despite his pursuit of Miss Biddy, when Fribble is asked his intentions his response lacks any sexual agency:

Biddy

Pray, Mr. Fribble, now you have gone so far, don't think me impudent if I long to know how you intend to use the lady who shall be honoured with your affections.

Fribble

Not as most other wives are used, I assure you. All the domestic business will be taken off her hands. I shall make the tea, comb the dogs, and dress the children myself, if I should be blessed with any; so that, though I'm a commoner, Mrs. Fribble will lead the life of a woman of quality.⁸³

In spite of this, Biddy encourages Fribble's attention, enjoying the compliments his affection and company pays to her own sense of fashionability. Fribble pursues Biddy as a potential wife, but his ideas of what a wife should be challenge the normal social construction of a marriage due to his sexual disinterestedness. By the end of the play Biddy realizes her error

⁸² David Garrick, *Miss in Her Teen; or, The Medley of Lovers. A Farce.*, in *The Plays of David Garrick*, vol. 1, Garrick's Own Plays, 1767-1775 (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), 1:2: 107-113.

⁸³ Garrick, *Miss in Her Teen*, 2.1: 139-146.

in encouraging Fribble's advances, concluding the farce with the warning to other women not to divert themselves "with pretenders":

Ladies, to fops and braggarts ne'er by kind.
No charms can warm 'em and no virtues bind.
Each lover's merit by his conduct prove,
Who fails in honor will be false in love.⁸⁴

The concluding remark that fops will prove "false in love" speaks to the concern that fops would not prove true husbands. In this way foppish relationships are desexualized. There is an interesting dichotomy whereby female fops are seduced by fashion in such a way that challenges their sexual and moral identity (as seen in *The Spectator No.281* and *The Female Fop*), while male fops are presented as ineffectual sexual husbands (as seen in *Miss in her Teens*). In this way then, while fashion is perceived as effeminizing and desexualizing the male fop, it has the opposite effect on female fops, who are presented as sexually promiscuous figures. Yet, by remaining constant to the Captain, Biddy is allowed to return to his protection having learned the folly of her behaviour.

The conflation of fashionability with sexual promiscuity became more prominent as the century progressed. David Garrick's play *Bon Ton; or High Life above Stairs* (1775) presents two female fops, Miss Tittup and Lady Minikin, who are both engaged in illicit intrigues. In a complex intertwining of romantic interests Lady Minikin liaises with Colonel Tivy who, in turn, is courting Miss Tittup at the same time as Miss Tittup is engaged in a dalliance with Lord Minikin. The company is joined by the countryman Sir John Trotley, Miss Tittup's uncle, who worries for his niece:

my niece, Lucretia, is so be-fashioned, and be-devil'd, that nothing I fear, can save her; however, to ease my conscience I must try: but what can be expected from the young women of these times, but sallow looks, wild schemes, saucy words, and loose morals! – they lie a-bed all day, sit up all night; if they are silent, they are gaming, and

⁸⁴ Garrick, *Miss in her Teen*, 2.1: 601-605.

if they talk, 'tis either scandal or infidelity; that they may look what they are, their heads are all feather, and round their necks are twisted, rattle-snake tippets.⁸⁵

The town, Sir John Trotley suggests, corrupts women. Fashion is conflated with moral laxity as women are presented as “be-devil’d” by over engagement with frivolity. The conflation of fashion with moral degradation was nothing new and can be seen repeatedly with reference to the male fop; however, in representations of female characters, such a connection had more damning consequences. Sir Trotley suggests that his niece, in attempting to become part of the Bon Ton, has risked her virtue as she abides by foreign diktats in fashion and also takes their lead in principles.

The play’s prologue explicitly links the ideas of fashionability, morality, and foreign influence in its defining of what constitutes the Bon Ton:

Whate’er your faults, ne’er sin against Bon Ton!
Who toils for learning at a public school,
And digs for Greek and Latin is a fool.
French, French, my boy’s the thing! jasez! prate, chatter!
Trim be the mode, whipt-syllabub the matter!
Walk like a Frenchman! for on English pegs
Moves native awkwardness with two left legs.⁸⁶

Drawing on the tropes associated with foppishness, then, the prologue emphasizes the frivolity, foolishness, and foreignness of fashion. The Bon Ton, it suggests, despise classical learning, promoting instead mere “prate” and “chatter”. Not content on their own two English legs, the Bon Ton imitate the French and attempt to walk like them, perceiving the English way as an example of “native awkwardness”. The tension between fashion and Frenchness is captured by Miss Tittup herself, who recognizes her reliance on continental fashions for developing her own sense of fashionability, declaring:

What a great revolution in this family in the space of fifteen months! - We went out of England a very awkward, regular, good English family. But half a year in France, and

⁸⁵ David Garrick, *Bon Ton; or, High Life above Stairs*, in *The Plays of David Garrick*, ed. Harry William Pedicord and Fredrick Louis Bergmann, vol. 2, Garrick’s Own Plays, 1767-1775 (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), 1.1: 231-238.

⁸⁶ Garrick, *Bon Ton*, Prologue: 40-46.

a winter passed in the warmer climate of Italy, have ripened out minds to every refinement of ease, dissipation and pleasure.⁸⁷

Despite the importance of fashion and sociability in these plays, concerns over the relationship between the two are often subordinated to issues of morality. The “dissipation and pleasure” which the characters adopt are explicitly linked with continental attitudes and contrasted with the morality of a “regular, good English family”. Sir John Trotley represents this English sense of good morals as he attempts to save these foppish women from what he terms the “monsters, foreign vices and *Bon Ton*”.⁸⁸ In this he is successful. As the play concludes both Lady Minikin and Miss Tittup realize the dangerous moral game they have been playing after nearly being caught in their various flirtations. They agree to accompany Sir John Trotley back to the country in order to remove themselves from the foreign vices of the town. According to Garrick, it is the role of the English “Knight Errant[s]” to “rescue distressed damsels” who have succumbed to fashion.⁸⁹

It is not solely sexual morality which is at stake in the female fop’s engagement with fashion, however. Financial considerations also become a focal point in representations of female fops. In his play *The School for Scandal* (1777) Richard Sheridan uses class to frame a discussion of the financial implications of fashionable consumption. Elevated from a country life, to the wife of a gentleman, Lady Teazle attempts to fashion herself according to her newly acquired status. Her husband, Sir Peter Teazle, decries her foppish behaviour, explaining in detail the embarrassment caused by his wife’s pretensions:

I chose with caution a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race-ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am

⁸⁷ Garrick, *Bon Ton*, 1.1: 109-113.

⁸⁸ Garrick, *Bon Ton*, 2.1: 212-213.

⁸⁹ Garrick, *Bon Ton*, 2.2: 211-212.

sneered at by my old acquaintance, paragraphed in the news-papers. She dissipates my fortune and contradicts all my humours.⁹⁰

Sir Teazle objects to Lady Teazle's pretensions, observing that in her behaviour and spending habits she risks ruining them both. While Lady Teazle's marriage and newly acquired status legitimize her accession into fashionable life, her overzealous procurement of "extravagant fopperies" outstrips what is deemed acceptable not only by Sir Teazle, but also by his acquaintances who sneer at the airs of Sir Teazle's wife.

Defending herself against her husband's complaints, Lady Teazle exclaims: "My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be".⁹¹ While her exclamation could be performed as certainty of her use of fashion, the phrase "I'm sure I'm not" could also be voiced in such a way that registers a sense of hesitation. Although a Lady in the play, we are constantly reminded that Lady Teazel was elevated to this status. The constant reminder of Lady Teazel's humble beginnings reveals a shift from the legitimating force of marriage that Dryden portrayed over seventy years earlier in *Marriage A La Mode*. In the character of Lady Teazel, Sheridan presents an individual whose lack of fashionable knowledge undermines her elevated class status. Sir Teazel observes such a tension in his response to his wife's exclamation, stating: "Oons, madam, if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus. But you forget what your situation was when I married you".⁹² Sheridan, in his portrayal of the Teazles, complicates the view of marriage as legitimizing foppish qualities. Instead, Sheridan suggests that it is male guidance rather than marriage itself which tempers the innate foppishness of women. In this instance Lady Teazel's presentation is similar to that of Lord Foppington from John Vanbrugh's *The Relapse, or, Virtue in Danger* (1696), who is elevated from a Sir to a Lord in the play. Much

⁹⁰ Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal and Other Plays*, ed. Michael Corder (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1.2: 8-14.

⁹¹ Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*, 2.1: 15-16.

⁹² Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*, 2.1: 25-27.

like Lady Teazel, Lord Foppington's new status is consistently undermined by his failed attempts to fashion himself in a manner befitting his new position.⁹³ Both figures are ridiculed for their perceived misunderstanding of their newly acquired status, and yet, in a pattern we have seen consistently throughout this chapter, the female fop – a Lady Teazel – is permitted to return to the folds of acceptable fashionability under the guidance of her husband. Meanwhile, the male Lord Foppington, remains a figure of ridicule.

Sir Teazel teaches his wife the correct manner of engaging in fashionable life without risking their fortune or future prosperity. What distinguishes the foppish women portrayed on the stage, therefore, is their ability to be reformed. The female fop is deployed within a narrative that is concerned with her morality. Significantly, all these examples of female fops are able to be 'saved' from virtuous ruin with the help of a noble gentleman. However, the same cannot be said of the male fops within these plays. While the Captain affords Biddy the opportunity to reform, he offers no such occasion for Fribble, declaring "Thou art a species too despicable for correction. Therefore be gone. And if I see you here again, your insignificancy shan't protect you".⁹⁴ Similarly, the foppish Lord Minikin from *Bon Ton* is admonished by Sir John Trotley who exclaims: "the dissipation of your fortune and morals must be followed by years of parsimony and repentance – as you are fond of going abroad, you may indulge that inclination without having it in your power to indulge any other".⁹⁵ Whereas female fops on the stage can be reformed through the guidance of husband or father, male fops are reprimanded and left to succumb to their foppish ways.

⁹³ Lord Foppington's purchasing of his title is discussed further in Chapter 2.

⁹⁴ Garrick, *Miss in Her Teen*, 2.1: 423-425.

⁹⁵ Garrick, *Bon Ton*, 2.2: 181-184.

Female Fops in the Novels of Frances Burney

The contrasting examples of male and female foppishness as exposed on the stage were formative to the portrayal of fops in novels. An understanding of female vanity as constructed in opposition to male vanity was used by Frances Burney to challenge understandings of not just female foppishness but of identity more broadly. Pushing past the stage representation of foppishness, Burney deployed foppish character traits across genders to engage with anxieties over morality, fashionability, affectation, and foreign emulation as identifying features of individual character.

In her 1778 novel *Evelina: Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, Burney engages in debates about foppish characteristics as evident in both male and female characters. The two fops of the novel, Mr. Lovel and Madame Duval, are deployed by Burney as representative of the dangerous potential of foppish traits. While Burney engages with the comic tradition of the fop, her exploration of foppishness also examines attitudes towards the fop. Within the novel Burney presents Mr. Lovel and Madame Duval as shrewd and manipulative individuals whose breaching of acceptable social behaviour is not the result of innocent misunderstandings. By challenging the comic perception of the fop as a gullible and unaware consumer Burney opens up the fops within her novel to more vehement treatment. The trend for violence towards foppish characters is something that will be discussed at length in relation to the macaroni in Chapter Four. However, it is worth noting here that an aggressive attitude towards foppish characteristics in the latter decades of the eighteenth century can be seen in the treatment of both male and female fops.

It is the often rude, rugged and staunchly British Captain Mirvan who plays the role of the antagonist to both Madame Duval and Lord Lovel throughout the novel. In keeping with the established trope of the fop as a Frenchified individual, Captain Mirvan's antagonism

towards Duval and Loval is set up in xenophobic terms. Declining a trip to Ranelagh Mirvan exclaims: “I’m almost as much ashamed of my countrymen, as if I was a Frenchman, and I believe in my heart there I’n’t a pin to chuse between them [...] the men, as they call themselves, are no better than monkeys”.⁹⁶ The deployment of “monkey” as an insult within this context speaks to a trend in literature to associate the fop with a simian identity. The association worked on multiple levels. Not only did it reiterate the fop’s association with the French (the French being associated with the primate within the eighteenth-century imagination), but it also played on the notion of ‘apeing’ as a process of imitation.⁹⁷ By adopting whatever is fashionable in dress and entertainment, the Captain suggests people become mere apes. Framing his aversion in xenophobic terms, the Captain emphasizes the superficiality of fashion as a system that promotes the aping of trends and blurs hierarchical distinctions upheld by class. This sentiment comes to the fore in issues of clothing. As something which is imitable, fashion allows fops to emulate their superiors, and it is these “monkeys” who the Captain challenges. Suspended in a space between rejection and toleration within the novel the fop’s adherence to fashion ensures their access to elite circles, while simultaneously inciting the ridicule of the Captain who sees through the façade and attempts to challenge it both verbally and physically.

Julia Epstein has noted that Burney’s writings reveal an “obsession with violence and hostility”, focusing particularly on the ways in which “crude verbal and physical abuse is woven into the fabric of the dangerous social world in which Evelina seeks a place”.⁹⁸ Yet the violence experienced by characters such as Duval and Lovel differs from the violence enacted against the protagonist, Evelina. While Evelina is harassed and physically

⁹⁶ Frances Burney, *Evelina, or, a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World*. (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 132.

⁹⁷ See: Casey, ‘The Fop “Apes and Echoes of Men”: Gentlemanly Ideal and the Restoration (England: 1660-1710)’.

⁹⁸ Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women’s Writing* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 5, 87.

manhandled on a number of occasions, these are sexualized attacks which unsuccessfully attempt to compromise her virtue. In contrast, the violent attacks against Duval and Lovel are rooted in issues of social class and deviance. Rather than reinforcing their claims to gentility as with Evelina, the attacks against Duval and Lovel undermine their claims to status. As Epstein discusses in relation to the treatment of Duval: “Burney concerns herself primarily with abuses of the façade rather than the edifice, the hair rather than the head”.⁹⁹ That is to say, the attacks against fops within the novel focus on each character’s external markers of status – their clothes.

The reader’s first introduction to Madame Duval involves a rhetorical dance between herself and Captain Mirvan, the dispute pivoting on the issue of clothing as a sign of status. After finding the as yet unidentified Duval in a state of distress having lost her party, Mrs Mirvan proposes that they should offer their assistance to the lady on the basis that she appears to be a woman of some gentility; being “very well dressed” she deserves to be treated with civility.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, the Captain stakes a claim to Duval’s identity as something other than what her clothing presents her to be, calling her both a “woman of the town” and a “wash-woman”.¹⁰¹ Although the Captain finally concedes to permit Duval into their coach, he goes on to repeatedly challenge Duval’s claim to status, and by extension her admittance into his company. This escalates to such a height that the Captain threatens to tip her out of the window and into the mud.¹⁰² Through the repeated references to her clothing, and the threats of violence against her person, the Captain enforces a social hierarchy that dismisses Duval’s clothing as evidence of her social position. Duval retorts: “why you had n’t no eyes; did you ever see a wash-woman in such a gown as this?”¹⁰³ For Duval, her clothing is all the

⁹⁹ Epstein, *The Iron Pen*, 88.

¹⁰⁰ Burney, *Evelina*, 57.

¹⁰¹ Burney, *Evelina*, 57, 59.

¹⁰² Burney, *Evelina*, 57, 59.

¹⁰³ Burney, *Evelina*, 59.

evidence that the Captain should need regarding her gentility and throughout the novel she encourages and expects others to define and identify her through reference to her clothing.

The Captain's threat of violence is actioned a few scenes later, when Duval is presented "entirely covered with mud, and in so great a rage" following a fall.¹⁰⁴ She laments the state of her clothing, exclaiming: "my new Lyons negligee, too, quite, spoilt!"¹⁰⁵ Rather impolitely, Duval draws particular attention to the state of her underclothes – but she does so to emphasis her wealth and status, with Lyons textiles being recognized as some of the most expensive and fashionable items available. Burney presents Duval as conscious of her reliance on clothing, yet by repeatedly drawing attention to her clothing Duval acts to undermine their usefulness as a social indicator. Like Lord Foppington, whose vast equipage betrays his lack of taste, Duval's self-conscious display of fashionability reveals her as a fop.

Neither Duval nor Du Bois, her French companion, are hurt in the fall, but the Captain's elation at their disordered dress speaks to the centrality of appearance to social position. He moves between looking at Duval and the "gentleman, and from the gentleman to the lady, to enjoy alternately the sight of their distress".¹⁰⁶ Aligned through the Captain's gaze, the two figures are brought together as examples of failed gentility. Left muddy and disordered, Duval is reduced in the eyes of the Captain to her true status and her foppishness is punished. The Captain takes delight in the scene because it enforces his ideas of not only social superiority, but also national superiority.

In the later staged highway robbery scene, Duval is harassed to such an extent that she is torn from the carriage and left "seated upright in a ditch", her feet "tied together with a

¹⁰⁴ Burney, *Evelina*, 75.

¹⁰⁵ Burney, *Evelina*, 76.

¹⁰⁶ Burney, *Evelina*, 76.

strong rope, which was fastened to the upper branch of a tree”.¹⁰⁷ In relaying the scene

Evelina focuses on the description of how the events affect Duval’s appearance:

Her head-dress had fallen off; her linen was torn; her negligee had not a pin left in it; her petticoats she was obliged to hold on; and her shoes were perpetually slipping off. She was covered with dirt, weeds, and filth, and her face was really horrible, for the pomatum and powder from her head, and the dust from the road, were quite *pasted* on her skin by her tears, which, with her *rouge*, made so frightful a mixture, that she hardly looked human.¹⁰⁸

In her description of Duval, Evelina emphasizes the disordered state of her clothing. Duval herself bewails the impact the attack has had on her appearance, as she repeatedly exclaims at the loss of her curls. The trope of the disordered fop is not unique to Burney, however, what Burney does within this scene is to complicate the view of the fop as purely superficial and fashion conscious. While male Restoration fops were presented as loving fashion for fashion’s sake, Burney indicates that Duval is acutely aware of the social importance of appearance as a signifier of her claim to gentility. Duval repeatedly refers to the fact she cannot be seen without her curls, exclaiming “that puppy has made me lose my curls! – Why, I can’t see nobody without them: - only look at me, - I was never so bad off in my life before”.¹⁰⁹ Without her curls and her fashionable clothes, Duval is aware that she cannot be seen in polite company. While the connection is implied in earlier depictions of fops, it is not as acutely displayed as it is in Duval’s admission of her reliance on fashion as a means to gain access to polite spaces. Duval is not just embarrassed; she knows that the Captain can and will use her lack of a wig against her as evidence of her lower status.

While the repeated focus on clothing in these violent scenes adds a comic touch to events, Burney is not endorsing violence as a means of correcting foppish behaviours. Rather

¹⁰⁷ Burney, *Evelina*, 173.

¹⁰⁸ Burney, *Evelina*, 174–75.

¹⁰⁹ Burney, *Evelina*, 176.

than focus on how fashion acts to downplay the violence, it emphasizes the perceived harshness of the violence enacted against the foppish characters. Burney challenges the idea that the fop's form of social performance justifies such virulent treatment. By bringing together both Duval and Lovel as representative of foppish identities within the novel, Burney offers new ways of interpreting not only the acts of violence themselves, but also the purpose of the fops with the novel. Through her exploration of violence, Burney offers an alternative way to consider the place of non-conforming identities within society, and to challenge their place within it. Without endorsing violence as a solution, Burney remains heavily critical of the fop and recognizes the fop's own complicity in the attacks levied against them. Evelina indicates that Duval exposes "herself voluntarily to the rudeness of a man who is openly determined to make her his sport".¹¹⁰ Duval accepts the Captain's abuse as her only alternative is to remove herself from the company. By rooting the depictions of attacks in clothing, Burney ultimately discredits the fop's identity, removing or damaging the only claim to status they have – their fashionable clothing.

Lovel comes under similar scrutiny throughout the novel. The most famous instance of his chastisement comes at the conclusion of the novel and evokes the simian trope discussed earlier. Captain Mirvan instigates a scene of chaos when he asks Mr Lovel if he has a brother as "I met a person just now, so like you, I could have sworn he had been your twin brother".¹¹¹ When Mr Lovel attests that he does not have a brother, Captain Mirvan produces a monkey to the company "fully dressed, and extravagantly *à-la-mode!*".¹¹² The scene taps into a rhetoric of aping that can be traced back to Restoration depictions of the fop in which fops were presented as attempting to use clothing to position themselves in socially elite circles, and so 'ape' their betters. Enjoying the joke and making full use of its potential when

¹¹⁰ Burney, *Evelina*, 85.

¹¹¹ Burney, *Evelina*, 472.

¹¹² Burney, *Evelina*, 473.

asked by Lord Orville if he will remove the monkey as it is scaring the ladies, Captain Mirvan retorts: “Why, where can be the mighty harm of one monkey more than another? [...] howsomever, if it’s agreeable to the ladies, suppose we turn them out together?”¹¹³

The comic ridicule of Lovel’s pretence to fashionability in this scene shifts quickly and seamlessly into a violent attack not only on fashionability but also on his physical person. Engaging with the trope of violence as evidenced in prints from the period which will be discussed at length in Chapter 4, the passage progresses into the chaotic scene where Lovel is bitten by the monkey and left bleeding. Much like the highway robbery scene, the aftermath of the violence centres around the description of clothing. Lovel cries out that his “new riding-shirts all over blood!”, while the Captain retorts “see what comes of studying for an hour what you put on”.¹¹⁴ The attack, the Captain suggests, is comeuppance for Lovel’s pretensions. This retort, however, does little to combat Lovel’s vanity, as his main concern echoes that of Duval’s as he laments that “I’ll never be fit to be seen again!”

By prioritizing fashion within the displays of violence enacted against both Duval and Lovel, Burney, I attest, is attacking not individuals per se, but foppish characteristics in all their permutations. It is not the individual but their embodiment of a specific set of characteristics which come under attack in *Evelina*. Whilst Burney does not wholeheartedly endorse the violence enacted against these characters, her portrayal of them signals a desire to rigorously police foppish traits. Unlike earlier female fops such as Melantha, Madame Duval is not given the opportunity to reform. Likewise, Mr. Lovel removes himself from the company but offers no indication of his intention to change. Under Burney’s tutelage the amiable reformers like Sir John Trotley are replaced by the likes of Captain Mirvan, a brute who aims to vilify the behaviour, not correct it. While the reader is not supposed to endorse

¹¹³ Burney, *Evelina*, 474.

¹¹⁴ Burney, *Evelina*, 476.

the Captain's actions, they are nevertheless encouraged to think about foppishness as an assemblage of character traits that threaten the stability of social signifiers. That is to say, in the works of Burney, gender plays a subsidiary role to foppish characteristics. The embodiment of foppish traits irrespective of gender is addressed by Burney, who prioritizes the admonishment of foppishness in all its forms, over a discourse on gender traits. For Burney, fops of any gender are unregenerate figures.

In a later novel *Camilla: or, A Picture of Youth* (1796), Burney finds a more nuanced format to articulate the ideas she first developed in *Evelina*. Burney introduces the novel's male fop in the following terms:

Clermont Lynmere so entirely resembled his sister in person, that now, in his first youth, he might almost have been taken for her, even without change of dress: the effect it produced upon the beholders bore not the same parallel: what in her was beauty in its highest delicacy, in him seemed effeminacy in its lowest degradation. The brilliant fairness of his forehead, the transparent pink of his cheeks, the pouting vermillion of his lips, the liquid lustre of his blue eyes, the minute form of his almost infantile mouth, and the snowy whiteness of his small hands and taper fingers, far from bearing the attraction which, in his sister, rendered them so lovely, made him considered by his own sex as an unmanly fop, and by the women, as too conceited to admire anything but himself.¹¹⁵

Contrasted with his angelic looking younger sister, Indiana, Clermont's beauty is used as evidence of his effeminacy and foppishness. Despite recognizing Indiana's beauty, Burney is heavily critical of the impact it has on the formation of Indiana's character: "The brilliant picture she presented to the eye by her smiles and her spirits, rendered the devastation caused by crying, pouting, or fretfulness so striking, and so painful to behold, that not alone her uncle, but every servant in the house, and every stranger who visited it, granted to her lamentations whatever they demanded, to relieve their own impatience at the loss of so pleasing an image".¹¹⁶ While it would be a stretch to identify Indiana as a fop, her beauty and

¹¹⁵ Frances Burney, *Camilla or A Picture of Youth*, ed. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom (Oxford and New York: Oxford World's Classics, 2009), 569.

¹¹⁶ Burney, *Camilla*, 45.

consequent vanity do align her with foppishness and result in the questioning of her morality. In her portrayal of Indiana, more so than Clermont, Burney represents the consequences of foppish characteristics to the moral integrity of the individual. It is Indiana's vanity which loses her the admiration of a suitor. Reminding the reader of the consequences of embracing foppish attributes, Burney preaches that moral worth wins out over foppishness.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the female fop in essence embodies the same traits as her male counterpart. She is vain, affected, Frenchified, and foolish. Yet, she is distinct from the male fop in a number of ways. Responses to, and representations of, female fops differ in so far as the figure's gender protects her from some of the more severe criticism the male fop faces; she is neither effeminate, nor emasculated, and her vanity, while ridiculed, is nevertheless perceived as an innate and therefore an inescapable predisposition. However, her gender also opens her up to other criticisms that the male fop is not so stringently subject to. In particular, the female fop is sexualized in a manner that is not as apparent in the male fop: her association with French fashions aligning her with the perceived promiscuity of French women.

Placing the female and male fop alongside each other provides a means to elucidate the importance of gender to constructions of the figure. The male fop is feminized and emasculated because he does not conform to eighteenth-century ideals of masculinity. In contrast, the female fop's manifestation of foppish characteristics is an extreme expression of her natural female characteristics. The dichotomy reveals the ways in which gender plays a significant role in the representation and associations of character traits. However, it also reveals that the concerns embodied by the fop were not gender specific but rather responded

to concerns about society as a whole; vanity, affection, and Frenchness were anxieties of the period in which concerns over foreign emulation, luxury consumption, and moral worth came under increasing scrutiny, and the figure of the fop provided an outlet for the exploration of these concerns, enabling authors to police appropriate, or rather inappropriate, behaviours and character traits. As we shall see in the rest of this thesis, gendered characteristics are central to how authors deployed the male fop in order to address prominent social and political concerns of the long eighteenth century.

Chapter Two

Fashioning National Identity on the Restoration Stage

*Who wou'd not rather get him gone
Beyond th' intolerablest zone,
Or steer his passage thro' those seas
That burn in flames, or those that freeze,
Than see one nation go to school,
And learn of another like a fool?
To study all its tricks and fashions
With epidemic affectations,
And dare to wear no mode or dress
But what they in their wisdom please;*¹

French influence on the fashion choices of the English elite was a prominent concern throughout the eighteenth century but held particular sway in the context of Charles II's Restoration. Fears that the allegiance of the newly restored monarch may lay with the country that gave him refuge during the Interregnum came to be expressed publicly through reference to fashion. Samuel Butler, in the opening quotation taken from his satirical poem *Satire on Our Ridiculous Imitation of the French* (c.1670), criticizes the process of fashionable imitation he views as ripe within the English nation, deploying a rhetoric of disease and lack of sense to admonish the process of foreign emulation. Utilized by satirists and playwrights to challenge French influence, the fop, I suggest, came to embody the concerns evidenced by Butler in his satire: namely foreign imitation, the importation of luxury, and affectation. In this chapter, I argue that on the Restoration stage the fop was recast as a specific response to Charles II's apparent preference for French fashions which the court subsequently emulated. While Charles was the King of England, Scotland, and Ireland during his reign, the chapter will focus on the specific anxieties surrounding Charles's position as the King of England, and the English court's adoption of French fashions. Furthermore, while this chapter focuses

¹ Samuel Butler, *Satire On Our Ridiculous Imitation of the French*, in *The Poetical Works of Samuel Butler. In Three Volumes. From the Texts of Dr. Grey and Mr. Thyer. With the Life of the Author, and Notes.*, Bell's second edition., vol. 3, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1784), 103–8, lines 1-10.

specifically on the influence of Charles on the representation of the fop on the Restoration stage, the chapter will discuss plays which fall under the rubric of Comedies of Manners, a genre which was popularized between the years 1660 and 1710, and thus will include plays which were not performed or written until after Charles' death in 1685. Despite being written or performed after Charles' death, I argue that plays which deploy the fop use the figure to explore the anxieties that Charles' rule represented. The chapter explores, therefore, how the fop came to be an emblem of Stuart masculinity. Anxieties over Stuart masculinity, I suggest, are written back into the plays through the fop. In the reign of William and Mary, the representation of the fop as a ridiculous and excessive figure was heightened, as the fop's expression of Stuart masculinity was increasingly challenged.

Up until the Restoration, 'fop' was a term used predominately to indicate foolishness. While foolishness was still the defining characteristic of the Restoration fop, the figure also came to incorporate new and distinct attributes. The fop as fool, Moira Casey suggests, surfaces in the Restoration as "an aristocratic gentleman who comically and overzealously attempts to exemplify the height of wit and fashion".² Mark Dawson distinguishes the Restoration fop as becoming "a certain kind of fool", a figure distinct from previous fools in so much as it is linked to "elite social structuration".³ In this chapter, I will move past Casey and Dawson's observations of the fop's association with "elite" culture by revealing the ways in which the fop was a specific manifestation of criticism of Charles II and his court. The fop came to embody a definitive set of characteristics tied to and perceived to be exhibited in the upper echelons of society. For contemporaries, Charles and his court's foolishness lay in their adoption of foreign fashions. The tendency of Charles to wear and promote French fashions

² Moria E. Casey, 'The Fop "Apes and Echoes of Men": Gentlemanly Ideal and the Restoration (England: 1660-1710)', in *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*, ed. Vicki K. Janik (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 207.

³ Mark S. Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 145-46.

at court was a particular point of contention throughout his reign, as it raised concerns over the king's loyalty to the English nation over which he presided. Focusing on issues of national identity as expressed through fashion, this chapter argues that debates surrounding Charles and his court's penchant for French clothing informed the creation, development, and portrayal of a more politicized fop on stage. As a performative medium, plays facilitated the portrayal of the fop as an embodiment of foreign excess and imitation. On the stage, the foreign affectation, fashionable exaggeration, and performativity of the fop, I suggest, could be exploited to its fullest.

The centrality of the relationship between the French and English throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is captured in Giuseppe Baretti's assertion that the "low people" of England believed that there were but two nations on earth: England and France.⁴ For this reason, modern criticism on the construction of national identity in the period often focuses on the relationship between the two nations. Traditionally, studies of this topic have prioritized discussion of difference, distinguishing between issues of military conflict, political ideology, and religious beliefs to showcase the nations' role as long-time enemies. Linda Colley, in her study of the formation of British identity, recognized the symbiotic cultural relationship between Britain and France, and offered new ways of thinking about what was a contentious, yet indispensable, relationship in the eighteenth century. Focusing on the prolonged military conflicts between the two nations, Colley argued that it was through constant collision with France that a sense of British identity was formed: "Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define

⁴ Also known as James Baretti. He states: "the low people all over the kingdom seem to think that there are but two nations in the world, the English and the French". See: Robin Eagles, *Francophilia in English Society, 1748-1815* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 18.

themselves collectively against it”.⁵ Gerald Newman takes a similar approach to Colley, recognizing that “neither society, in the later eighteenth century at least, can be understood without studying the other”.⁶ Both of these studies recognize the role of literature within the formation, construction, and dissemination of ideas surrounding national identity. Newman argues that “writers and intellectuals”, the “articulate minority”, are responsible for recognizing when a nation’s culture is under threat, and it is through them that the first attempts at redress are made.⁷ The groundwork laid by both Colley and Newman has facilitated explorations of national identity as represented in the literature of the period. Robin Eagles focuses on literature as a medium which reveals contemporary “perceptions” and acts as “powerful indicators of the true state of affairs”.⁸ Drawing on a range of literature and caricature, Eagles concludes that “[n]ational character in England was dependent upon France”.⁹ In other words, what these authors argue is that English and British identity in the eighteenth century can only truly be understood when viewed in relation to France.¹⁰ On the Restoration stage, I argue, the fop became a medium for the expression of the tension that Colley, Newman, and Eagles identify. In particular, I focus on how the fop’s use of clothing became a medium to explore the contentious relationship and sense of competition between the two nations.

To enable a full understanding of the fop’s use of clothing, or rather the way authors fostered an association of the fop with the Restoration court, and specifically Charles II,

⁵ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 2nd rev. ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 6.

⁶ Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830*. (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), 2.

⁷ Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism*, 57.

⁸ Eagles, *Francophilia in English Society*, 7.

⁹ Eagles, *Francophilia in English Society*, 176.

¹⁰ In discussions of this kind England and Britain are often used interchangeably by contemporaries, however they are normally referring to specifically England, or rather the English Court and elite society in London. As such in this chapter I will generally refer to England when discussing the relationship between France and Britain.

through clothing, I will first offer an exploration of fashion as medium for the expression of national identity. I will then offer a reading of Charles II's coronation portrait using the theories of fashion discussed. Focusing particularly on the competing identities at play in the portrait, I consider the tensions inherent in Charles' desire to foster an English identity with his adoption of French fashions. I will then turn to a consideration of Charles' court more broadly, addressing how playwrights attempted to challenge the court's adoption of foreign fashions through ridicule. Focusing on the fop as a character within Comedies of Manners, the final section of the chapter will posit that studying the fop's use of fashion offers new ways of understanding the political, social, and economic issues at play in the eighteenth century. While Charles died in 1685, I argue that his influence continued to be felt in the fop's portrayal on stage. Fashion, I suggest, became the medium through which playwrights expressed concerns over French influence on the king as well as the nation more broadly. The representation of the fop's fashionability is indebted to and informed by Charles' own fashionable choices. The fop's growing popularisation and increased exaggeration in the wake of Charles' death and the ascension of William and Mary to the throne, speaks to the enduring importance of Charles as a figurehead for Stuart identity, as well as the importance and influence French fashions were perceived as having on London's most elite. Taking on an increasingly exaggerated form in the reign of William and Mary, the fop's comic persona comes to represent the failings of Charles' rule and draw attention to the new forms of acceptability embodied by the Protestant William and Mary, and their Whig supporters.

Stuart Masculinity and Foppishness

The relationship between Stuart masculinity and foppish identity is not a wholly new concept. Mark Dawson has made the connection between the fop and Jacobitism:

However much the figure might appear a superficial fashion-plate, the fop accrued ever-deeper layers of socio-political meaning by interrogating closely the ‘quality’ beneath these clothes in response to the protracted succession crisis and the erosion of socio-political consensus within elite society.¹¹

Taking this observation further, Dawson explores the socio-political context of the fop in relation to James Francis Edward Stuart, the nephew of Charles II, and known as the Old Pretender, he states:

If a fop could be considered a possible ‘counterfeit’ in terms of his natural superiority, then similar doubt surrounded James III. Although he bore all the signs of royal pedigree, many believed that the Pretender so-called was not James II’s true heir. From the moment he was born, political invective cast doubt on the child’s parentage (that he was really the son of a brickmaker, smuggled into Whitehall in a warming-pan and passed off as royal progeny) and conjectured that the heir would need to travel to France where, very much like a gentleman-beau making the grand tour, he might be taught how to body forth the *appearance* of his *alleged* lineage.¹²

For Dawson, the defining characteristic which aligns the fop and the Jacobite Prince is their respective claims to legitimacy (or illegitimacy). While Dawson confines his observations of the fop’s links to Jacobitism to the early eighteenth century and particularly James III, I go back further to explore the popularisation of the fop on stage during Charles’ reign. I will interrogate how Charles II’s flamboyant and French style informed the creation of the fop. Moreover, I will argue that anxieties over Charles’ expression of masculinity continued to be embodied in the fop after his death. By examining the fop’s representation as a figure of Stuart masculinity, I contend that the figure was deployed within plays to contest and challenge concepts of masculinity. In particular, I show how the fop’s Frenchified fashions and manners were represented as a danger to national identity.

The fop’s relationship to Jacobitism, and hence Stuart identity, in the eighteenth-century imagination was intimately tied to the understanding of foppishness as representative of fickleness and fashionability. *The Character of the Beaux In Five Parts, To which is Added*

¹¹ Mark S. Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 200.

¹² Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre*, 191.

The Character of a Jacobite was published in 1696 and draws explicitly on the affinity between the fop and Jacobite in both its title and the main body of text.¹³ The author, a Young Gentleman, describes a number of different types of Jacobites, including “A Fourth sort of *Jacobites*, [...] the *Beaus*”.¹⁴ In detail he describes why beaus are Jacobites:

What those Asses, who mind nothing but *Witt, Dressing*, and going to *Plays*? those capering Jack-puddings, who throughout the Year don’t read a *Gazette*? Prithee, Why are they *Jacobites*? why! because ’tis the fashion.¹⁵

The author suggests the performative nature of politics, revealing the fickle allegiances of the Jacobites who, only wish to be called Jacobites because it is a “modish Name”.¹⁶ Implying that it is fashion, rather than political ideology that attracts fops to claim to be Jacobites, the author conflates Jacobitism with superficiality. In presenting Jacobitism as a fashionable whim, the author attempts to undermine the cause by signalling its transience, implying that it will soon fall once again out of fashion. Further fostering the association of Jacobitism with fashionable capriciousness, the author indicates that it is a cause primarily taken up by women. The fop, the author contends, is only a Jacobite to ingratiate himself towards the Ladies who “are generally *Jacobites*” – the reason for the women’s preference to Jacobitism, the author goes on to suggest, is due to their perception of Williamites as “slovenly Fellows” in contrast to James’ supporters.¹⁷ Fashion, therefore, is depicted as central to an understanding of Jacobitism in order to downplay it as a political and military threat. This was in light of the uncovered plot to kill William, and the invasion scare. The author uses the fop as a means to disarm concerns concluding his assessment of Jacobites with the observation that “tho’ they are confounded Hectors, yet are as confounded Cowards”.¹⁸

¹³ Beaux or Beau were often used synonymously with fop – see introduction for further discussion of this.

¹⁴ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux, in Five Parts ... to Which Is Added The Character of a Jacobite / Written by a Young Gentleman.*, (London printed : [s.n.], 1696), 42.

¹⁵ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux*, 42.

¹⁶ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux*, 44.

¹⁷ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux*, 42, 45.

¹⁸ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux*, 46.

The Jacobite's cowardice is exemplified, the author suggests, through the ease with which the Jacobite transfers his allegiances. Considering the apparently interchangeable terminology of fop and Jacobite, the author indicates that both are pretenders, ones who change allegiance as suits their needs:

But these Fops, who are such violent exclaimers against King William, are as good Williamites, when the Company they are with are so, as the best; they are always conformable to the Society they are in, lest they should occasion a quarrel.¹⁹

Figures of scorn, “ridiculous Monsters”, the fop and the Jacobite change their political colours depending on the company in which they reside – treating political ideology like a piece of clothing which can be put on, and taken off, at leisure.²⁰ While focusing on James in this instance, the ideas expressed in this piece are reworkings of the concerns critics had articulated in relation to Charles and the fop on stage – a preoccupation with fashion to the detriment of integrity, identity, and national loyalty.

Fashion and National Identity

The fop in the eighteenth century was a literary representation of the tensions inherent to Britain and France's relationship throughout the period – particularly the issue of foreign emulation. As an Englishman who had succumbed to French fashions and manners, the fop provided a medium for the portrayal and exploration of the eroding influence of France on the English sense of identity. The fop also provided an outlet for the discussion of intense political concerns at the heart of English society. While many critics have recognized the fop's role as a touchstone for debates on the importation and adoption of French fashions and manners, the fop remains on the peripheries of these studies, deployed as an example of

¹⁹ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux*, 45–46.

²⁰ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux*, 44.

foreign influence with comparatively little attention given over to the figure's wider implications. By linking studies of national identity with those concerned with fashion, it becomes apparent that the fop acts as a signifier for a much more specific anxiety. The king, as the embodiment of national values, appears to have conflicting loyalties if we pay sufficient attention to aspects of dress, and the fop acts a medium to express these concerns.

Sociological studies of fashion have long recognized fashion's function as a medium for expression of identity. For instance, Fred Davis argues that "through clothing people communicate some things about their persons".²¹ Similarly, Grant McCracken suggests that clothing plays a "diachronic role" acting as a "communicative device which social change is contemplated, proposed, initiated, enforced, and denied".²² Fashion's ability to express "sex, occupation, nationality, and social standing" is explored in detail by John Carl Flugel, who attests not only to the communicative value of clothing, but suggests its importance as a means of social distinction.²³ Recognizing clothing's role as a signifier of identity, Flugel simultaneously points to the implications fashion has for understanding different historical moments. As Davis explains further, fashion relies on recurrent instabilities in social identity: it allows the observer to deduce information based on strict dichotomies prevalent in social understanding such as, youth/old age, masculine/feminine, work/play.²⁴ Just as these dichotomies fluctuate in different periods, so too do the implications of clothing. Therefore, to use Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell's phrase, whilst fashion acts as "a highly visible and versatile vehicle for social commentary", this is only true in so far as clothing is both created and worn by those living in a particular moment.²⁵

²¹ Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 4.

²² Grant David McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 61.

²³ John Carl Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), 15.

²⁴ Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*, 17.

²⁵ Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell, *Fashion Victims: Dress at the Court of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 7.

Several studies have recognized the importance of this understanding of fashion in relation to the eighteenth century. Reviewing the social value of clothing within a specifically eighteenth-century context, Beverly Lemire notes that “the choice of daily attire was as much a reflection of political, economic and social concerns as it was a matter of fashion”.²⁶ Taking this argument further, scholars including Chrisman-Campbell, Anna Reynolds, and Aileen Ribeiro have discussed the importance of clothing for understanding the political, social, and economic landscape of eighteenth-century Britain.²⁷ “The emphasis placed on clothing, even when ridiculed,” declares Ribeiro, “means it cannot be dismissed as a waste of time”.²⁸ As an indicator of not only identity then, but also of political, social and economic issues, fashion can reveal much about opinions and concerns in the eighteenth century. One particular concern which has been addressed by Chrisman-Campbell, is the relevance of fashion to debates over national identity and foreign influence. Despite a concentration on the latter half of the century Chrisman-Campbell’s observation that it is precisely because “French fashion was an economic matter that it became a political matter”, is equally applicable to the Restoration and the first half of the eighteenth century.²⁹ The relationship between fashion as an economic and a political matter is particularly pertinent to understanding the fop’s portrayal on the stage. The fashionable, and particularly French, presentation of the fop on stage is evidence of the political concerns of the period; concerns intrinsically tied to Charles’ relationship with France.

Building upon Flugel’s observation that “the ultimate and essential cause of fashion lies in competition”, I argue that the fop epitomized this sense of competition as it related to

²⁶ Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 5.

²⁷ Chrisman-Campbell, *Fashion Victims*; Anna Reynolds, *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013); Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction: Dress in Art and Literature in Stuart England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2005).

²⁸ Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction*, 9.

²⁹ Chrisman-Campbell, *Fashion Victims*, 7.

the rivalry between England and France in the Restoration.³⁰ The Restoration provides a unique context for the study of fashion as a political signifier. Charles' loyalty to England was questioned as a result of his preference for French clothing. As an expression of national identity at a time of national upheaval, fashion provided a medium to articulate and showcase a range of concerns over England's relationship with France. "[N]o topic," Gesa Steadman suggests, "is reflected upon at greater length in the texts on Anglo-French relations in the seventeenth century than fashion".³¹ It was not fashion in and of itself that worried critics, but rather what the adoption of French fashions implied: as a signifier of national identity and, by extension, national loyalty, the adoption of French fashion by English men (and women), came to be conflated with ideas of national betrayal. While the fop as a touchstone for these debates has been widely commented on, including in Anna Reynolds's observation that the "fop is just one example of the way the theatre played a role in shaping English perceptions and stereotypes of national forms of dress from other countries", I want to take the argument further.³² The fop's fashionable portrayal was a specific response to contemporary concerns over Charles' loyalty to England. Despite the fop's comedic function, I suggest, the figure represented very real concerns. The figure evoked the notion that Charles' French clothing was evidence of his inability to effectively represent the English nation. As a figure who was largely performed on the stage during William and Mary's reign, the fop as an embodiment of Charles was ridiculed as an ineffectual leader, a figure to be laughed at and mocked. As such the fop facilitated the promotion of William and Mary's more reserved and Protestant leadership – fostering an anti-French sentiment.

³⁰ Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes*, 138.

³¹ Gesa Steadman, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century France and England* (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 68.

³² Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 284.

Charles II: Fashion and Conflicting Loyalties

Traditionally, scholars have aligned Charles with the figure of the rake: “a fashionable or stylish man of dissolute or promiscuous habits”.³³ Emma Atwood, for instance, labels Charles “the quintessential rake of the Restoration”.³⁴ This is largely a result of Charles’ prolific and very public love life. He was notorious for his sexual escapades and numerous affairs with women including Barbara Palmer, Nell Gwyn, and Louise de Kérouaille. The tendency to view the rake as a reflection of the court’s sexual activities has marginalized considerations of the court’s wider influence on the different character types of the period. The rake and fop, I believe, represent two distinct facets of Charles’ character: while the rake reveals the sexual aspect of Charles’ life, the fop becomes representative of questionable national loyalties, as expressed through his preference for French clothing and excess. The fop already existed prior to Charles reclaiming the throne. However, on the Restoration stage, the fop was deployed to represent and echo concerns regarding Charles’ loyalty to the English nation through an emphasis on the adoption of foreign fashions. Charles’ close connection with the theatre, I suggest, enabled the politicization and popularization of this newly distinct type of fop.

The court and the theatre had strong links throughout the Restoration; not only did the court’s characters and antics provide fodder for the witty playwright, but elite men supported the theatre through patronage and attendance. Charles’ own support for, and attendance at, the theatre was widely documented. Samuel Pepys records the King’s attendance at a new production of *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln’s Inn fields, on the 11 September 1661:

walking through Lincolne’s Inn fields, observed at the Opera a new play, *Twelfth night*, was acted there, and the King there. So I, against my own mind and resolution,

³³ ‘Rake, n.7’, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, n.d.) 17 December 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157646>.

³⁴ Emma Katherine Atwood, ‘Fashionably Late: Queer Temporality and the Restoration Fop’, *Comparative Drama* 47, no. 1 (2013): 85–111. 105.

could not forbear to go in, which did make the play seem a burthen to me, and I took no pleasure at all in it.³⁵

On a separate occasion, Pepys recorded sitting in a Box next to the King at a performance of the tragedy *The Cardinall* by James Shirley, on the 2 October 1662.³⁶ The King also offered more practical support to the theatre by lending his clothes for certain productions. In 1661, Charles' coronation gowns were lent to Thomas Betterton for his role as Prince Alvaro in the revival of William Davenant's *Love and Honour*.³⁷ John Downes recorded the occasion in his historical review of the stage, *Roscius Anglicanus*, in which he noted the splendour and dramatic impetus the clothes of prominent courtiers added to the performance:

[the] Play was Richly Cloath'd; The King giving Mr. *Betterton* his Coronation Suit, in which he Acted the Part of Prince *Alvaro*; The Duke of *York* giving Mr. *Harris* his, who did Prince *Prospero*; And my Lord of *Oxford*, gave Mr. *Joseph Price* his, who did Lionel [...] The Play having a great run, Produc'd to the Company great Gain and Estimation from the Town.³⁸

While Charles never went so far as to lend his clothes for the performance of a foppish character, his willingness to support the theatre through the lending of clothes nevertheless cemented the association between the king and the theatre. Not only did the adoption of royal clothes add credibility and believability to the performance of royalty on stage, but it also blurred the distinction between the stage and court. By the time Restoration comedies came into their own as a genre, audiences were accustomed to seeing extravagant clothes on the stage. The fop's luxurious and extravagant dress therefore was not something that was completely new to audiences. Playwrights were therefore able to invite audiences to see the similarities between the ostentatiousness of the fop's costume, and the King's own attire.

³⁵ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A New and Complete Transcription* (London: Bell, 1970), vol 2: 117.

³⁶ Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol 3: 211.

³⁷ Richard W. Bevis, *English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660-1789* (London and New York: Longman, 1988), 34.

³⁸ John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, A New ed. (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1987), 52.

Despite being an official coronation portrait, John Michael Wright's portrait *Charles II* (Figure 2.1), was likely not completed until 1676, almost fifteen years after Charles' coronation. The dating of the painting is important on two fronts: the stylistic elements of both clothing and accessories adhere to fashions of a later date than 1661, and the symbols of monarchy on display reflect the desire to reassert the claims of the monarchy after eleven years of Republican rule, as well as the failure of the unpopular Third-Anglo-Dutch War. The war lasted two years, from 1672 to 1674, and swung public opinion firmly against France. As David Ogg affirms, the war "accentuated that hatred of the French which was soon to supersede dislike of the Dutch".³⁹ Charles' adroit choice to commission the portrait at this moment was significant. The decision reflected what Kevin Sharpe identifies as Charles' 'need' to assert his English monarchical status: he used the regalia as symbols of his commitment to historical notions of English kingship.⁴⁰

Evoking the grandeur of previous rulers, Charles' masculine stance with legs spread is reminiscent of portraits of Henry VIII.⁴¹ According to Sharpe, the painting echoes portraiture of "Henrician and early Stuart times" in an attempt to "re-establish a visual sense of historical continuity and to displace the republic into the shadows".⁴² To further foster a sense of historical continuity, the portrait depicts the replica of the crown of St Edward which the goldsmith Robert Vyner was ordered to recreate. It replaced the original, which had been sold during the Interregnum. Representing victory, legitimacy, and glory, the crown is a defining symbol of monarchy, with the word 'crown' functioning as a metonym for monarchy. Other

³⁹ David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, Second, vol. 1, 2 vols (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1956), 361.

⁴⁰ Kevin Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule: Images of Restoration and Revolution Monarchy 1660-1714* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 99.

⁴¹ See: Hans Holbein the Younger, *King Henry VIII*, c 1537, Oil, Panel, 259 x 158 x 11.5cm, c 1537, WAG Inventory Number: 1350 Walker Art Gallery Collections; British School, 16th century, *The Family of Henry VIII*, c 1545, Oil on canvas, 144.5 x 355.9cm, c 1545, RCIN 405796, Royal Collection Trust.

⁴² Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule*, 98.



Figure 2.1

Charles II c.1671-76. By John Michael Wright. Oil on Canvas, 281.9 x 239.2 cm.
The Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 404951.

items of regalia are also evident, including the orb and sceptre.⁴³ The orb symbolizes the earth, with the cross mounted on the top signifying Christianity. Charles holds the orb and cross in his left hand, demonstrating his status as head of the English church. The sceptre, similarly, represents Charles' ruling status, denoting his authority and power. Together, the items of regalia were immediately recognizable symbols of English monarchy: epitomizing the wealth and values of the English nation.

The insignia of the Knights of the Garter, which had become synonymous with the English aristocracy, are also on prominent display within the painting. An elite institution established in 1348 by Edward III, the order was associated with the highest levels of nobility and exclusivity. The two main items associated with the Order were The Great George and the Garter. The former can be seen resting on Charles' chest, a three-dimensional figure of St George on horseback slaying a dragon, and the latter worn around the left calf, uses gold lettering to display the motto: "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (Shame on him who thinks evil of it). Both items are clearly visible within the coronation portrait of Charles, evidence of his allegiance to not only The Knights of the Garter, but also their founding Saint and the patron Saint of England, St George. Further fostering the association between himself, St George and consequently England, Charles adroitly altered the date of his coronation day to coincide with the feast of St George. This knowledge adds extra impetus to the association of the portrait, in particular the depiction of Charles' clothing, with notions of English tradition and heritage.

These elements of clothing, however, do not work in isolation. We should also note in relation to Wright's evocation of monarchical status symbols the fabric of the billowing red

⁴³ Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule*, 104. The cost to replace all the regalia sold in the Interregnum was approximately £30,000.

gown, made of velvet and lined with powdered ermine, which cost Charles £2,271 19s, 10d.⁴⁴

In addition to their expense, the fabric choices were also of social significance. Alan Hunt discusses the use of clothing as a mechanism for the visual display of social hierarchies, as reinforced by sumptuary laws. In his discussion of fur's significance as an emblem of rank, Hunt states that "Ermine and sable were consistently reserved for the highest social rank" namely, members of the royal family, due to its rarity.⁴⁵ However, the social prestige associated with ermine went beyond its rarity, the symbolism of the white fur was also allied to notions of moral purity: an ancient European legend stated that the ermine "would allow itself to be killed rather than soil its beautiful coat with mud".⁴⁶ The significance of colour within the gown extended beyond the use of white ermine. Red had been a colour restricted to the dress of the upper nobility since 1533, when the Act for the Reformation of Excess in Apparel implemented controls on a number of fabrics and colours.⁴⁷ The choice of the white and red colour palette therefore immediately identifies the portrait with English monarchy, power and status. From the crown, to the choice of fabric, the main features of the portrait act to reaffirm Charles' kingship by evoking historical precedent and traditional insignia. The accumulative effect is a confirmation of Charles' English regal status.

Yet, this clear attempt by Charles to fashion himself as English is only effective if we "read" Charles' clothing as an ensemble, ignoring, as McCracken suggests most cursory categorisations do, any small details which may contradict the overriding visual impact of the clothing.⁴⁸ While the regalia and fabric immediately recall associations of English monarchy,

⁴⁴ Diana De Marly, *Louis XIV & Versailles* (London: BT Batsford Ltd, 1987), 39. Also see Robert Hume, *The Value of Money in Eighteenth-Century England: Incomes, Prices, Buying Power; and Some Problems in Cultural Economics*. To put the cost of the gowns into context, Hume estimates the average income for 80% of families in this period was no more than £50 per annum.

⁴⁵ Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 126.

⁴⁶ Boria Sax, *The Mythical Zoo: Animals in Myth, Legend, and Literature* (New York and London: Overlook Duckworth, 2013), 32.

⁴⁷ Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, 128.

⁴⁸ McCracken, *Culture and Consumption*, 65.

the smaller details of style act to reveal and confirm Charles' affinity to predominantly French fashions, as well as French symbols of royalty. Particularly noteworthy are the buckled shoes with red heels. A trend pioneered by Louis XIV in the 1670s, the impracticality of the red heels acted as a statement of the wearers' leisured and privileged lifestyle. Easily marked, wearers of the red heels would have to travel by coach or sedan chair on even the shortest ventures outdoors to avoid scuffing or muddying the heels. The sumptuary laws of France reinforced the sense of status attached to the heels, stipulating that only members of the French royal family and those in favour with Louis XIV could wear red heels.

Charles' adoption of red heels, therefore, revealed not only his monarchical status, but also his favour with his cousin in France. Charles' adornment of the French-style shoes did not go unnoticed by contemporaries; indeed, the red heels became an enduring feature of dress used to signify the fop's appropriation and affectation. John Gay's poem *Trivia: or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716), talks of a fop in the "nicest tread", who "risques, to save a coach, his red-heel'd shoes".⁴⁹ In Edward Moore's periodical, *The World No.202* (11th November 1756), the eidolon Adam Fitz-Adam suggests that the red heel can be used to identify the fop on stage:

In a theatre, which is the glass of fashion, and the picture of the world, it is well known that a strict attention is always paid to what is called the *dressing* of the characters. The miser has his thread-bare coat; the fop his grey powder, solitaire, and red heel: each character hanging out a sign, as it were, in his dress, which proclaims to the audience the nature of his part, even before he utters a word.⁵⁰

Even in the nineteenth century the association between foppishness and the red heel can be depicted in a bright yellow suit, a sword resting at his hip and wearing a pair of red heeled

⁴⁹ John Gay, *TRIVIA; Or, THE ART of WALKING the Streets of LONDON*, in *Literature Online* (ProQuest), accessed 25 November 2019, <https://www.proquest.com/books/trivia-art-walking-streets-london/docview/2147748449/se-2?accountid=12860>. ll. 53–54.

⁵⁰ Edward Moore, *The World. By Adam Fitz-Adam.*, vol. 4 (London: Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1753), 1212.

seen in the painting of Lord Foppington from Vanbrugh's *The Relapse* (Figure 2.2). The fop shoes. The depiction of an infamous fop in such attire at this later date, I suggest, speaks to the enduring influence and association of Charles and French fashion on the fop's representation.

The overriding connection between Charles and his cousin Louis is clearly evident when comparing their respective depictions in coronation robes. The portrait of *Louis XIV* in *Coronation Robes* (1701), by Hyacinthe Rigaud (Figure 2.3), puts Louis' heels on prominent display, his feet angled in a similar manner to Charles' so that the heel is fully visible. But more than this, the overall effect is one of sartorial excess, with pomp of dress in both paintings being the main feature. From the height and length of the wigs to the cut of the billowing gowns, the focus in both portraits is the representation of the King's monarchical status; the King is shown to embody the nation, their loyalty, wealth, and status reflected in their clothing, clothing which is predominantly of French origin. Stedman recognizes the centrality of fashion to the relationship between Charles and Louis, stating that criticism of Charles' relationship with France revolved around the "king's material body", it was Charles' "imitation of French culture" which concerned contemporaries; more so than his familial connections with France.⁵¹

Charles' portrait offers a visual expression of the potentially conflicting loyalties exposed through his use of clothing. The evident inclination towards French styles exhibited in the portrait was a primary concern for contemporaries throughout his reign. As early as 1661, Charles' adoption of French clothing came under criticism. John Evelyn presented the King with his newly published work *Tyrannus, or, The Mode: In a Discourse of Sumptuary Lawes*, in 1661. The pamphlet, which neared thirty pages in length, challenged the system of

⁵¹ Stedman, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century France and England*, 65.



Figure 2.2

Lord Foppington Relating his Adventures. By William Powell Frith (1819-1909). Oil on canvas. Private Collection.



Figure 2.3

Portrait of Louis XIV (1638-1715), King of France. 1701. By Hyacinthe Rigaud. Oil on canvas, 2.77 x 1.94 m. Musée du Louvre, Collection of Louis XIV, INV. 7492.

sumptuary laws within England, raising concerns regarding French influence on not only clothing styles but also the manufacturing of textiles as “swarmes” of French tailors descend on England.⁵² Although in the main body of the text references to France are muted in favour of a more general assertion for a rethinking of sumptuary laws, in his address to the reader, Evelyn makes clear his desire to admonish the use of French fashion within the court:

For my own part, though I love the *French* well (and have many reasons for it) yet I would be glad to pay my respects in any thing rather than my *Clothes*, because I conceive it so great diminution to our Native Country, and to the discretion of it.⁵³

Directly challenging Charles’ propagation of French styles, Evelyn links fashion to ideas of national identity. As Reynolds explains “the adoption of foreign clothing was seen as a deliberate disruption to the notion of ‘Englishness’ and was considered by many to be a particularly grievous sin when committed by the ruling monarch, an emblem of national identity”.⁵⁴ The sense of betrayal to one’s nationality is evoked by Evelyn, who states that to adopt French clothing is a “great diminution to our Native Country”. Fashion choices are an expression of identity for Evelyn, who hints to the negative impact this can have on a nation’s sense of self.

For Evelyn, the adoption of French clothing could be interpreted as an expression of political fealty to France. Tempering his criticism, however, Evelyn suggests that Charles possessed an “elegant”, natural English shape, and therefore did not need the excess of French “Art to render him more graceful”.⁵⁵ To help combat the prevalence of French fashions in England, Evelyn proposes the development of a new style of dress manufactured using English wool, a fabric he states is “inferior to no covering under Heaven”.⁵⁶ At this time wool was a premium English product, which faced fierce competition from French silks

⁵² John Evelyn, *Tyrannus, or, The Mode in a Discourse of Sumptuary Lawes.*, Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 562:02 (London : Printed for G. Bedel, T. Collins, and J. Crook., 1661), 6.

⁵³ Evelyn, *Tyrannus*, 2.

⁵⁴ Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 187-188.

⁵⁵ Evelyn, *Tyrannus*, 30.

⁵⁶ Evelyn, *Tyrannus*, 21.

in the Restoration period and throughout the eighteenth century. Concerns surrounding the adoption of French fashions therefore were economic as well as social: by suggesting that Charles endorse woollen products, Evelyn attempted to rectify not only the perception of Charles' preference for French styles, but also encourage national trade.

In 1666, Charles appeared to heed Evelyn's advice. Charles' decision to adopt and promote a more reserved and English style was prompted by political necessity. A number of misfortunes including the Great Plague, the Great Fire of London and the humiliating defeat at the Battle of Medway, were perceived by some as God's punishment for the court's immorality and corruption.⁵⁷ Parliament, in response to the criticism levelled against the court and Charles, implemented several laws intended to combat the proliferation of luxury and immorality. Two significant instances are noteworthy, firstly the Act for Burying in Woollen Only 1666, and secondly the development of an English vest. Neither turned out to be particularly enduring examples of attempts to support English industry, but they do reveal Charles' awareness of clothing as a signifier of national identity and showcased his intention of being seen to support and prioritize English products. Initially implemented in 1666, The Act for Burying in Woollen Only was intended to boost English trade by enforcing the burial of corpses in English woollen products. Ultimately unsuccessful, it was repealed in 1677. In another attempt to support English trade, in October of 1666 Charles promoted a new style of

⁵⁷ See Edward Stillingfleet, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at St. Margarets Westminster Octob. 10, Being the Fast-Day Appointed for the Late Dreadful Fire in the City of London*, Early English Books Online (London: Printed by Robert White for Henry Mortlock and are to be sold at his shop, 1666). A fast-sermon, preached to the Lords in the High-Court of Parliament assembled on the day of solemn humiliation for the continuing pestilence, Octob. 3, 1666: "the Peers of the Kingdom to whom I am called to speak, should take it to heart: You well know, the due Honour of your Nobility cannot privilege or exempt you from the common Obligation and Law of Religion, no more then it can from common Judgements; your houses may be entred by a Pestilence, or a Fire, as soon as others: And need I be your Monitor, That the greater your Persons and Honours are, the more pressing is your obligation to be Religious, because your Examples are more leading, and imperative, and influential" XXVIII-XIX.

vest at court, constructed using English materials, including wool, the luxury good of the English textile industry and one of the country's main industries.⁵⁸

In the eyes of contemporaries, both of these acts were conscious attempts by Charles to assuage concerns over his preference and support of French styles. The anonymously published *England's Vanity* (1683) aligns the Act for Burying in Woollen Only with Charles' adoption and support of the vest as an attempt to promote English trade in favour of foreign imports:

Always however be excepted the incomparable Tunick and Vest, so very comely in it self, so very advantageous to the Drapers of the Kingdom, perhaps the most grave and manlike Dress that ever *England* saw, which had the unhappiness to be brought in too late, and the hard Fate to be sent out again too soon. And would have answered all the expectations of publick Commodity pretended by the Woolen Act, so that had our Gentlemen pleas'd to have danc'd in them any longer, the Farmers would very cheerfully have paid the Fidlers. But we can never hold when it is well, such an influence hath the *French Pipe* to make us ca[...]per after them, in all their Follies, to our own dishonour and Ruine.⁵⁹

Although insisting Charles' attempt came too late and was not enduring, the author reveals their affinity to the vest as a "manlike" style, one superior to the "Follies" of French dress. The new styled vest consisted of a "black cloth or wool vests, or plainer coats cut to the body", it was generally worn over Spanish styled narrow breeches.⁶⁰ The clear cut to the vest, and the plainness of its style was initially intended to combat charges of "immorality" and "effeminacy" associated with the French styles which dominated the court, however, the vest soon took on a life of its own.⁶¹ By the Queen's Ball on the 15th November, examples of the new vest had been adapted to incorporate the very splendour they had been created to

⁵⁸ Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, 72.

⁵⁹ Compassionate conformist., *Englands Vanity or The Voice of God against the Monstrous Sin of Pride, in Dress and Apparel Wherein Naked Breasts and Shoulders, Antick and Fantastick Garbs, Patches, and Painting, Long Perriwigs, Towers, Bulls, Shades, Curlings, and Crispings, with an Hundred More Fooleries of Both Sexes, Are Condemned as Notoriously Unlawful. With Pertinent Addresses to the Court, Nobility, Gentry, City and Country, Directed Especially to the Professors in London / by a Compassionate Conformist.*, Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 1034:10 (London : Printed for John Dunton, 1683), 124-125.

⁶⁰ Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 50.

⁶¹ Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 187.

counteract, with some being “embroidered with jewels in the French manner”.⁶² Therefore, despite intending to create a simple and elegant English style, the vests eventually came to promote the same excess as French styles.

Issues over aristocratic loyalty to the English textile and manufacture industries only increased as Charles’ reign progressed. In 1670 Charles signed the Secret Treaty of Dover. The treaty stipulated that Charles would receive a yearly pension from France in exchange for English support against the Dutch, with the pension being dependent upon Charles’ conversion to Catholicism. Although the treaty was not public knowledge, a number of authors voiced suspicions surrounding Charles’ relationship with France, postulating that he was in fact financially beholden to the foreign nation. In 1681, for instance, John Dryden published the poem *Absalom and Achitophel*, in which he directly accuses Charles of being in the pay of France: “And bribed with petty sums of foreign gold/Is grown in Bathsheba’s embraces old”.⁶³ From 1670 onwards, little was done to stop the dominance of French textiles, with the French making significant moves to undermine the English cloth industries. Louis XIV’s financial advisor and the individual who ran France’s national finances, Jean Baptiste Colbert, introduced a range of legislation to curb the importation of English goods, including tariffs which saw the export of cloth fall from 90,000 pieces to 20,000 by 1677.⁶⁴

The only help to English manufacturing came, ironically, from French exiles. A growing number of restrictions imposed on Protestants in France led to a wave of French Huguenots emigrating to England, with this developing into a large-scale movement in 1685 after Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, leaving French Protestants vulnerable to hostility and violent attacks. The immigration of French Huguenots was especially beneficial

⁶² De Marly, *Louis XIV & Versailles*, 42.

⁶³ John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, in *The Poems of John Dryden*, vol. 1, 5 vols, Longman Annotated English Poets (London: Longman, 1995), Lines 709-710.

⁶⁴ De Marly, *Louis XIV & Versailles*, 54-55.

to the silk industry within England, as “many of the French refugees were weavers who established themselves in Spitalfields in London”.⁶⁵ Despite this boost to the English textile manufacturing industry however, the French remained the dominant force throughout the Restoration. Charles’ refusal to take significant steps to reduce French imports thus encouraged the perception of the king as failing to offer economic support to English trade, and his adoption of French clothing became symbolic of not only his affinity with France and French styles, but also of his disregard for English industry, which opened up questions regarding where his loyalties lay.

The perception that Charles lacked loyalty to the English nation was therefore a prevalent concern articulated throughout his reign. Early criticism by the likes of Evelyn, which warned of the potential dangers of Charles’ foreign affectation, were perceived as having little impact on Charles’ predilections’ or actions. As Wright’s c.1676 portrait of Charles reveals, the king remained strongly associated with French fashions. Attempts to challenge Charles’ adoption of foreign fashions were hampered by the need for his critics to not appear too harsh or critical of the restored monarchy. Accordingly, whilst Charles’ preference for French clothing and the potential implication of his adoption of foreign fashions for perceptions of his national loyalty were called into question, he was not challenged outright. The concerns which critics identified in relation to Charles were instead to find full expression in the fop. Through the fop, contemporaries were able to directly address the issue of Charles’ adoption of French fashions. As a character type, the fop was deployed to ridicule French fashionability and affectation and explore the negative consequences of excessive engagement with foreign fashions. In other words, the fop was deployed as a direct response to Charles’ perceived preference for French fashions. The fop

⁶⁵ De Marly, *Louis XIV & Versailles*, 57.

provided a medium through which authors could explore the impact of French fashion on an individual's identity and national loyalty.

The Fop on Stage

The fop became the form for the popular representation of these concerns over the imitation of French culture. The small French details clearly evident in the portrait of Charles are emphasized and brought to the fore in presentations of foppish characters. Likewise, the criticism levelled against Charles in the works of Evelyn and Dryden was amplified through this comical figure. Playwrights used the popular medium of comedy to challenge the importation and adoption of French fashion, which, as I have shown, was a dominant point of contention throughout Charles' reign. Through the fop, playwrights were able to vehemently challenge and contest understandings of fashion as a signifier of identity. Playwrights such as George Etherege, James Howard, John Vanbrugh and William Wycherley deployed the fop as a comedic tool that challenged false pretension, foreign emulation and the excessive fashionability of society. Fops such as Lord Foppington, Sir Novelty Fashion, and Sir Fopling Flutter became staple features of comedies of manners, a dramatic genre popular from 1660 to 1710. As the designation 'comedies of manners' indicates, the genre reflected a social elite whose manners were ripe for comic treatment because of their flamboyant engagement with foreign fashion. Capturing the intent of playwrights to ridicule the ruling elite, the fop in the Restoration became inextricably linked with notions of gentility, drawing on Charles and his court as an example of what it perceived as foolishness. This foolishness was presented as a result of their emulation of French fashions. As Butler's satire captures,

there was a pervasive fear that English identity was being eroded by a gentry whose imitation of the French made them “foreigners at home”.⁶⁶

As a genre rooted in visibility and materiality, plays offered the opportunity to test the boundaries of clothing as an expression of national identity. The fop could be used as a less direct means of challenging Charles’ and the court’s French fashionability. However, while Charles’ preference for French fashions was complicated by conscious attempts to reassert his Englishness, the fop offered an exaggerated version of French fashionability that openly and explicitly challenged the importation of French styles, manners, and deportment. The fop was a comedic tool for playwrights, a figure who functioned in the plot as a foil to the rake, an individual who provided the butt of the joke. The fop was also a medium through which playwrights could provide real social commentary. Playwrights used the fop to reveal and contest foreign importation while protecting themselves from censure. Although the fop functioned as a vehicle for criticizing Charles and his court, the figure was not represented as contemptible during this period. Rather, much like Charles himself, who has been remembered to posterity as the ‘Merry Monarch’, the fop remained a likeable character despite his transgressions.

It is a common scholarly assessment that the Restoration stage was heavily influenced by the social moment of its invention. Casey, for instance, states that playwrights drew inspiration from the “licentious Restoration court” where “false wit, exaggerated fashions, and superficial aspirations” were pervasive.⁶⁷ Edward Burns also reminds us that to “use the term ‘Restoration Comedy’ is to posit the direct relationship of a historical event to a literary form. It is to suggest that this particular dramatic genre is characterized by its relation to

⁶⁶ Butler, *Satire On Our Ridiculous Imitation of the French*, Line 60.

⁶⁷ Casey, ‘The Fop “Apes and Echoes of Men”: Gentlemanly Ideal and the Restoration (England: 1660-1710)’, 207–8.

social and political change”.⁶⁸ Focusing particularly on the fop, Andrew Williams suggests that “dramatic comedy cannot thrive apart from society and the interactive play which accompanies it”.⁶⁹ Restoration plays, therefore, cannot be divorced from the social context in which they were written and performed. Comedies of manners in this period were firmly aligned with the social and political context of their moment. All men of title, fops such as Lord Foppington, Sir Novelty Fashion, and Sir Fopling Flutter, became a staple feature of comedies of manners and speak to the relationship between drama and court society.

Playwrights themselves openly acknowledged their debt to the court for providing them with material for their plays. Written and performed during the lifetime of Charles, Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675), addresses the apparent connection between the stage and the King’s Court. In the play, it is the fop Sparkish that voices the connection between comedy and the cultural moment of the Restoration. Lambasting the portrayal of gentility on stage, Sparkish cries:

Damn the poets ... they make a wise and witty man in the world, a fool upon the stage ... Their predecessors were contented to make serving-men only their stage-fools: but these rogues must have gentlemen, with a pox to ’em, nay, knights; and indeed, you shall hardly see a fool upon the stage, but he’s a knight.⁷⁰

Noting the gentility of comic characters, Sparkish draws attention to the fop’s role as a reflection of the court. Wycherley proceeds to defend the portrayal of errant gentility on the stage through Dorilant, who responds “Blame ’em not, they must follow their Copy, the Age”.⁷¹ Also written and performed during Charles’ reign, the prologue to *The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676), is used by George Etherege to highlight the link between the stage and the court:

⁶⁸ Edward Burns, *Restoration Comedy: Crises of Desire and Identity* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 1.

⁶⁹ Andrew P. Williams, *The Restoration Fop: Gender Boundaries and Comic Characterization in Later Seventeenth Century Drama* (Lewiston, New York: E Mellen, 1995), 4.

⁷⁰ William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, in *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*, ed. David Womersley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 3.2: 130-143.

⁷¹ Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, 3.2: 147-148.

But I'm afraid that while to France we go,
To bring you home Fine Dresses, Dance and Show:
The Stage like you will but more Foppish grow.⁷²

By insisting that as long as the court remains foppish so too will the stage, Etherege not only pays homage to his muses, but recognizes the debt of authors to the court as a source of inspiration for their work. As these exchanges show, playwrights were acutely aware of the cultural context in which they were operating. Their choice to portray the court therefore is important to our reading of the characters which these plays portrayed, as these plays are politically and socially inflected.

Although fops were far from representative of English identity in the period, they were integral to the construction of Englishness, for they acted as an 'other' – something against which Englishness and English masculinity could be defined. Andrew Williams offers a framework for understanding the fop as a social 'other', a figure whose presence is a reminder of social failings and offers instruction for the improvement of English masculine ideals:

Social folly instigates laughter, but it is a corrective laughter which calls for conformity. As a manifestation of social folly, the fop refuses to conform to the codes of fashionable society. Instead he interprets those codes through a filter of affectation and theatrically and creates his own set of normative standards for socially acceptable behaviour.⁷³

The corrective function of comedy is exhibited through the fop. In laughing at the figure, the audience dismisses his claims to represent fashionable society and normative codes of behaviour are enforced. This process of 'othering' is central to Williams's thesis that fops act as a foil for rakish characters, offering comic relief but also enforcing the rake as representative of the apex of masculinity. Alongside his focus on masculinity, Williams also acknowledges the French influence on the fop, noting how the French element to the fop's

⁷² George Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, in *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*, ed. David Womersley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), Prologue: 19-21.

⁷³ Williams, *The Restoration Fop*, 92.

characterization as an ‘other’ adds “a nationalistic flavour to the fop’s identification as a suitable figure for comic ridicule”.⁷⁴ This nationalistic flavour is central to a reading of the fop’s political function and the debates enacted against Charles’ adoption of French styles.

James Howard’s play *The English Mounseieur* [sic] (1674 – first performed 1666) highlights the importance of the fop’s pretence to fashionability to the figure’s characterisation. Significantly, Howard’s play was first performed in 1666; as I discussed earlier, this was a particularly important year in the reign on Charles. Criticism of Charles during this year was exacerbated by political and social strife within the country. It was Charles’ clothing, and perceived French loyalties, which came under particular scrutiny during this period. Therefore, it is noteworthy that within the play the issue of French superiority in fashion is consistently addressed and dismissed. Within the play, the fop Frenchlove is duped into buying English suits after being told they were produced by a French tailor. In an instance of dramatic irony, the audience is aware of the plot to trick Frenchlove, heightening the comic zeal of the following exchange:

Frenchlove: Sir, 'tis impossible the hand of an English Taylor should have set on any on... knot of the Garniture of these two suits.

Comely: Now will I hold my life they were made by an English Taylor.⁷⁵

Howard contests the notion of French superiority in the production of clothing by revealing Frenchlove’s incapability of distinguishing between French and English-made suits. By undermining the claims to French ascendancy in the textile industry, Howard not only challenges preconceived understandings of French fashionable superiority but also promotes English trade. Trade became a central element to debates surrounding issues of national loyalty, as Gerald Maclean notes: “Questions of national identity and difference of what it

⁷⁴ Williams, *The Restoration Fop*, 44.

⁷⁵ James Howard fl, *The English Mounseieur a Comedy, as It Is Acted, at the Theater-Royal by His Majesty’s Servants / by the Honorable James Howard, Esq.*, Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 919:16 (London: Printed by H. Bruges for J. Magnus., 1674). 3.1: page 29.

means to be English or British or both, could be framed in terms of international trade and imperial ambition”.⁷⁶ The exchange between Frenchlove and Comely speaks to this tension: by pitting English and French trade against each other in this manner, Howard challenges the view perpetuated by Frenchlove that French textiles are superior.

It is not only trade, however, which is contested by Howard. Frenchlove exhibits a conscious desire to be perceived as French, he considers himself as an example of a “French-Englishmen”.⁷⁷ It is not only Frenchlove who considers himself in these terms: other characters in the play also present him as a hybrid figure of two nationalities. Mr Welbred declares Frenchlove to be a “very admirable character of a man, I perceive he is e’en no better, nor no worse, than an effected English man --- translated into a ridiculous French man”.⁷⁸ Significantly, it is through his clothing that Frenchlove primarily advertises his French affinity, drawing upon the idea that fashion could signify national identity, or rather, national loyalty and preference.

Frenchlove. The Devil in’t that this *England* should be my Country, *I* cannot think my self the least a kin to it, since *I* have been in *France*, 'twould vex me plaguly were *I* not a Frenchman in my second nature (that is) in my fashion, discourse and cloathes. [...] A rump of the Devil, that *I* should have an English father and mother, and they a French son.⁷⁹

Frenchlove acknowledges that while his natural body is English, he defines himself as French through his adoption of clothing. In doing so, Frenchlove articulates the concern which contemporaries often identified with Charles’ perceived preference for French clothing – that it revealed his affinity with France. Due to Charles’ position as head of the English state, and representative of the body politic, his adoption of French clothing became symbolic of a fractured English identity. This dynamic is further reflected in the dressing room scene

⁷⁶ Gerald M. MacLean, *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration: Literature, Drama, History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). 5.

⁷⁷ Howard, *New The English Mounsieur*, 2.1: page 17.

⁷⁸ Howard, *The English Mounsieur*, 1.1: page 1.

⁷⁹ Howard, *The English Mounsieur*, 1.1: page 4.

through the process of constructing the artificial French body of the fop out of the natural English body.

For many critics, the cultural ramifications associated with the importation of French excess in fashion outweighed the potential benefits to trade. In one of the many anonymous satires which targeted French fashionability, the author of *A Satyr against the French* (1691), states:

Their various Arts of Dress we next survey,
In which they bear so great a sway:
All *Europe* to their Fashions bends the Knee,
In that they've gain'd the *Universal Monarchy* ⁸⁰

France is presented as ruling over England and “undermining [...] our Nations Trade”.⁸¹ The nation has succumbed to France’s power due to an English desire for luxury French goods. However, it is not only French goods that England has adopted: they have also succumbed to the French characteristics of excess and effeminacy which leaves them “Echo’s” and “shews of Men”.⁸² By pandering to French styles, fops become subservient to a foreign nation, and therefore become less than men. This is further emphasized by the hinting towards universal monarchy. The dominant concern regarding masculinity was therefore cemented in constructions of fashionability in the period, as excess became a defining feature of effeminacy, reserve in dress became a symbol of English masculinity.

Etherege’s play *The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter*, created one of the most famous fops of the period: Sir Fopling Flutter. Despite his prominence in the title of the play, Sir Fopling is a rather minor character as far as the driving of the plot is concerned. What Sir Fopling provides, though, is an outlet for the contesting of national identity, the ridiculing of French imitation, as well as a punch line for much of the comic force of the play. He is

⁸⁰ Anon, *A Satyr against the French*, (London: Printed, and are to be sold by Randal Taylor, 1691), 5.

⁸¹ Anon, *A Satyr against the French*, 11.

⁸² Anon, *A Satyr against the French*, 3.

introduced to the audience prior to his entrance onto the stage, adding weight to the powerful visual sight of his person. The characters Dorimant, Medley and Young Bellair prepare the audience for Sir Fopling's arrival, directing the audience response by emphasizing Sir Fopling's pretensions and pointing to the characteristics that the audience should look for in the character.

Medley. There is a great Critick I hear in these matters lately arriv'd piping hot from *Paris*.

Young Bellair. Sir *Fopling Flutter* you mean.

Medley. The same.

Young Bellair. He thinks himself the Pattern of modern Gallantry.

Dorimant. He is indeed the pattern of modern Foppery.

Medley. He was Yesterday at the Play, with a pair of Gloves up to his Elbows, and a Periwig more exactly Curl'd then a Ladies head newly dress'd for a Ball.⁸³

Aligning Sir Fopling's fashionability with that of the "Ladies", Medley effeminizes the fop, and offers a damning assessment of the main facets of the fop's character: his propensity for excess (as exhibited through his clothing), and his affinity with France. Dorimant's declaration that Sir Fopling is the "pattern of modern Foppery" distinguishes Sir Fopling from the other male characters in the play, who, although dressed well, do not model themselves on "*Paris*" as Sir Fopling does. Furthermore, in dismissing his attempts at fashionability, Dorimant articulates an aversion to Sir Fopling's portrayal of a French identity, mocking the frivolity and ridiculousness of such a use of clothing.

Female characters within the play also challenge what they perceive to be Sir Fopling's French affectation. Emilia, Lady Townley, and Dorimant ridicule Sir Fopling's false sense of fashionability:

Emilia. He wears nothing but what are Originals of the most Famous hands in *Paris*.

Sir Fopling. You are in the right Madam.

⁸³ Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, 1.1: 434-445.

Lady Townley. The Suit.

Sir Fopling. Barroy.

Emilia. The Garniture.

Sir Fopling. Le Gras –

Medley. The Shooes! [sic]

Sir Fopling. Piccar!

Dorimant. The Perriwig!

Sir Fopling. Chedreux.⁸⁴

Framed as exclamations, Emilia, Lady Townley, Medley and Dorimant's comments need no response. Yet, Sir Fopling answers them as if they are questions. In this sense, these characters provide Sir Fopling with an opportunity to expose his own folly. Sir Fopling responds to each exclamation with a further explanation of the excess, and in doing so, becomes complicit in his own ridiculing.

Although instructive as a written text, the full potential of this scene as one of ridicule has to be understood in terms of the opportunities it provided for performance. That is to say, the witticisms of this exchange lie in the potential it offers for the way it can be performed. Within the short exchange, Sir Fopling exhibits a misuse and misunderstanding of language which is similar to that of Melantha and Miss Malaprop which was discussed in the previous chapter. The linguistic errors – “Barroy”, “Chedreux” – are more effective and noticeable when vocalized – and expose Sir Fopling's incompetence and affectation as he pretends to possess a knowledge and understanding of French. “Barroy” is most likely a misrepresentation of the place name Barrois, a slip up that an astute and educated audience would likely recognize. Similarly, “Chedreux” is merely a synonym for periwig. The short snappy responses from Sir Fopling are supposed to showcase his knowledge; however, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that the scene acts to reveal the inadequacies of Sir

⁸⁴ Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, 3.2: 261-271.

Fopling's grasp on fashion, and indeed of French as well. Although small mistakes, the mistakes would have been easily recognizable to a contemporary audience versed in both French and fashionable terminology.

The excessive and exaggerated performance of fashionability captured in the exchange between Sir Fopling, Dorimant, Medley, Emilia and Lady Townley is further captured in the dressing room scene. A trope which was widely used in Comedies of Manners, the dressing room scene was deployed as a means to challenge the excess and performativity of foppish fashionability. John Vanbrugh utilizes the dressing room scene in his play *The Relapse, or, Virtue in Danger* (1696), a sequel to Colley Cibber's *Loves Last Shift, or, The Fool in Fashion* of the same year. The play sees the fop Sir Novelty Fashion elevated to the title of Lord Foppington and follows the story of the fop as he is tricked out of a bride and her large dowry by his younger brother Tom. Vanbrugh successfully engages with the dressing room trope within the play to provide a scene which mirrors the king's levee, thereby consciously aligning the fop with the king and court processes. Lord Foppington is first introduced to the audience in a state of undress. He is accompanied on stage by "de Shoomaker, de Taylor, de Hoiser, de Semstress, de Barber".⁸⁵ In surrounding himself with professionals from France, Foppington perpetuates the ideology of French superiority. However, Vanbrugh is simultaneously able to mock Foppington by not only signalling the excess of so many figures (who would have overcrowded the stage), but also by promoting the falsified French accent to compliment the artificiality of the clothes. The sense of falsehood is further played out through the realization that despite Foppington's pretence to fashionability, he is reliant on his French entourage of stylists. As Williams notes, Foppington's "characteristic unnaturalness is magnified because of this introductory image of

⁸⁵ Sir John Vanbrugh, *The Relapse*, in *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*, ed. David Womersley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). 1:3: 22-23.

the fop before he is ‘made’ by his clothes”.⁸⁶ Vanbrugh uses the dressing room scene to emphasize Foppington’s forced and theatrical persona. The fop, Vanbrugh suggests, is an affected individual who uses clothing to create a French style which is not natural to his character or his body.

Fops are often accompanied by French tailors and servants on the stage; for example, Lord Foppington has La Verole, and Sir Fopling recommends his French tailor to Dorimant. This affinity for French tailors was a reflection on Charles’ own preference for French workmen. The gowns worn in the Wright painting, and indeed at the coronation itself, were made in France by Claude Sourceau, a French tailor who would remain one of Charles’ tailors throughout much of his reign.⁸⁷ Although finished in London by the English tailors John Allen and William Watts, the significance of Charles’ choice of initial tailor is instructive.⁸⁸ It is apparent that it was not only in accessories and styles which Charles promoted French superiority, but also in the construction of garments as well. This proved a problem throughout Charles’ reign as issues of economic support for subjects and home-grown textiles became a dominant concern reflected upon by critics.

In an even more theatrical version of the dressing room scene, Sir Courtly Nice from John Crowne’s *Sir Courtly Nice: Or, It Cannot Be* (1685), is accompanied on stage by a choir of men and women who sing a love song to him as he dresses. As the stage directions indicate, the choir are not just singing for Sir Courtly’s entertainment, but rather address the song directly at him: “*Chamber – Sir Courtly Nice dressing, Men and Women singing to him*”.⁸⁹ The choir pay Sir Courtly homage by offering their addresses directly to him and

⁸⁶ Williams, *The Restoration Fop*, 88.

⁸⁷ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 12.

⁸⁸ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 12.

⁸⁹ John Crowne, *Sir Courtly Nice, or, It Cannot Be: A Comedy: As It Is Acted by His Majesties Servants*, The second edition., Early English Books Online (London: Printed by MB for R. Bentley and Jos. Hindmarsh, 1693). 3:2: stage directions.

providing him with a regal setting for his dressing. In doing so the “fop’s dressing ritual becomes a choreographed display of musical theatre”, heightening the theatrical and excessive spectacle of his dressing.⁹⁰ This exaggerated performance of Sir Courtly’s morning ritual moves beyond a singular moment of comic entertainment; it places the process of dressing within an overly theatrical scene in order to expose the artificiality of clothing. The practical purposes of getting dressed is removed from the scene: instead, clothing in this instance is represented as part of a performance, something which is practiced and finessed.

In an inversion of the traditional dressing room scene, it is the rake Dorimant, and not Sir Fopling, who Etherege presents in the process of dressing. The opening stage directions set the scene:

*A Dressing Room, A Table Covered with a Toilet, Cloaths laid ready.
Enter Dorimant in his Gown and Slippers, with a Note in his hand made up, repeating Verses.*⁹¹

Neither a fop, nor a woman, Dorimant was not the obvious choice to partake in the on-stage dressing room ritual. However, Etherege inverts the traditional association of the dressing room scene to great effect. By revealing Dorimant in the process of dressing, Etherege presents a man who is both concerned with his appearance and yet remains natural, revealing himself as a man of wit and manners. As Atwood observes in relation to Dorimant: “The rake’s world is one of action; he does not pause to savor the act of dressing [...] Though they both care about their clothes and accessories – a fact that often produces critical slippages between them – the rake loves *being*, not *getting* dressed”.⁹² Indeed, the focus of Dorimant’s dressing room scene – unlike that of Lord Foppington – is not the act of dressing itself, but rather the social interaction which forms the basis of the process of dressing. As such, a

⁹⁰ Andrew P. Williams, ‘The Centre of Attention: Theatricality and the Restoration Fop’, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 4, no. 3 (January 1999), 18.

⁹¹ Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, 1.1: stage directions.

⁹² Atwood, ‘Fashionably Late’, 93-94.

number of visitors attend Dorimant throughout the scene, recreating the public levee. For Dorimant, it is the status associated with the dressing process and the clothes he wears which are of importance, rather than the clothing in and of itself. Furthermore, Dorimant explicitly reveals that his purpose in dress is to accentuate the natural in order to successfully court women. Or, in other words, the rake appreciates the status his clothing confers onto him while deploring the process of dressing itself. It is a process to enhance and signal his status, rather than a process which has intrinsic merit in and of itself. He does not create himself in the dressing room, but rather uses the dressing process and his clothing to elevate and enhance his natural status.

In his attempts to fashion himself to the liking of women, and in a manly style, Dorimant takes great care not to dress to excess. Instead, Dorimant goes to great lengths to accentuate his naturalness, turning down Handy's offer of "Essence or Orange Flower water" in favour of his natural musk: "I will smell as I do to day, no offence to the Ladies Noses".⁹³ Dorimant's decision to opt against perfume in his dressing ritual is linked back to his conquest of women – he desires to be perceived as natural and manly. Conversely, the fop's dress obliterates any sense of naturalness. In William Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer* (1676), the artificial scent adopted by the fops Novel and Lord Plausible is used by Manly as an insult: "I But, since you have these two Pulvillio Boxes, these Essence Bottles, this pair of Musk-Cats here, I hope I may venture to come yet near you".⁹⁴ Both Novel and Plausible are objects of scorn because their artificiality extends beyond their dress and into every section of their lives, reducing them to mere objects. By inverting the dressing room scene, Etherege reveals the necessity to be presented fashionably, but also indicates that this can be achieved without succumbing to the exaggeration and excess associated with French styles of dress.

⁹³ Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, 1.1: 418-421.

⁹⁴ William Wycherley, *The Plain Dealer*, in *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*, ed. David Womersley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 2.1: 672-676.

Dorimant's recognition of clothing's importance, when situated alongside his flippancy towards fashion beyond his basic needs, emphasizes the message of moralists who suggested that clothing should accentuate the natural, not subvert and overrun it.

The Periwig as a Symbol of Foppishness

The periwig was a prominent French fashion made popular by Louis XIII and preserved by his son Louis XIV. During the Restoration and eighteenth century the periwig became a symbol of the type of foreign fashionable excess English authors attempted to moderate. It was a fashion that also became a defining feature of the Restoration fop's wardrobe.

Although originally a style reserved for the elderly and balding, Louis XIV popularized the periwig for all men of standing, and it became a staple feature of aristocratic life in both France and England by the late seventeenth century. Charles himself did not adopt the periwig until the April of 1664, as was recorded by Samuel Pepys who on a visit to Hyde Park "saw the King with his periwig, but not altered at all" for the first time.⁹⁵ As noted by Pepys, the bounteous construction of the full-bottomed periwig – also known as the peruke – closely resembled the mane of dark curls Charles had naturally possessed throughout much of his life, and which had recently started to grey; therefore, Charles' general appearance didn't initially seem much altered by his new acquisition. However, the wig inferred status, and its social relevance as well as fashionable convenience was not lost on Charles, as Ribeiro affirms:

Wigs were status symbols precisely because they were expensive, difficult to wear with ease, and required correct manners and deportment. They were hard to keep clean, and required constant re-setting and placing on a block to keep their shape.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol 5: 126.

⁹⁶ Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction*, 239.

The periwig therefore not only allowed Charles to flatter his vanity (by concealing his newly greying hair), but also fostered the image of the King as representative of the social apex, as he was able to continuously reaffirm his status through his adoption of the expensive and difficult to carry fashionable item. For Charles, the wig became a central feature of his ensemble in his later years: from 1664 onwards, ‘heads of hair’ of growing sizes made regular appearances in the royal accounts and depictions of Charles in both print and statue always attempted to capture the full-bottomed wig.⁹⁷

Joseph Roach aligns the periwig’s prominence in court life with its associated presence on stage, stating; “the Carolean periwig so memorably characterized his [Charles’s] persona and his reign. It also, not coincidentally, characterized his theatre”.⁹⁸ The wig’s association with status was drawn upon by the playwrights of the Restoration stage. Often individuals whose status was in question, fops were regularly presented as having purchased rather than inherited their titles. Lord Foppington, in Vanbrugh’s *The Relapse*, boasts of money well spent in the acquisition of his title:

Well, ’tis an unspeakable pleasure to be a Man of Quality – Strike me dumb – My Lord – Your Lordship – My Lord *Foppington* – Ah! *C’est quelque Chose de beau, que le Diable m’emporte* –
Why the Ladies were ready to pewke at me, whilst I had nothing but Sir *Navelty* to recommend me to ’em – Sire whilst I was but a Knight, I was a very nauseous Fellow – Well, ’tis Ten Thousand Pawnd well given – snap my Vitals⁹⁹

Foppish characters such as Lord Foppington attempted to assert their status by adopting fashionable items, such as the periwig, which were associated with social sophistication and deportment. In particular, the full-bottomed periwig favoured by Charles became a defining feature of fops, who were often immediately identifiable on stage by their ostentatious and ever-growing wigs. Simon Callow notes that “Wigs were a vital accessory to all gentlemen,

⁹⁷ Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction*, 239. Also see Honoré Pelle’s Marble bust of Charles dated 1684.

⁹⁸ Joseph R. Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 117.

⁹⁹ Vanbrugh, *The Relapse*, 1.3: 11-21.

but in particular to fops, who could express all their love of excess through it, and use it as least as effectively as another limb”.¹⁰⁰ This is evidenced in the case of Sir Fopling Flutter from Etherege’s *The Man of Mode*, whose wig is so big that it is disordered by the wind, and he is in constant need of an “Antichamber to adjust ones self in” before he is fit to be seen by company.¹⁰¹

The most famously enlarged periwig of the Restoration stage, however, belonged to the actor Colley Cibber. An actor, manager, and playwright, Cibber was particularly renowned for his portrayal of fops, playing some of the most popular fop characters of the period, including Lord Foppington, Sir Fopling Flutter, and Sir Courtly Nice. He was commended as acting with “exceeding Perfection, in hitting justly the Humour of a starcht Beau, or Fop”.¹⁰² Cibber’s use of wigs was notorious: under his guidance the wig became the “crowing item in the wardrobe of the greatest fop of the age”.¹⁰³ Cibber’s use of the full-bottomed periwig in his portrayal of fops was immortalized by the Italian painter Giuseppe Grisoni, in his portrait from c.1700 of *Colley Cibber* in the character of Lord Foppington (Figure 2.4). In the painting, Cibber is depicted in a blue braided coat with a gold trim and red cuffs. He wears a lace cravat and a white glove on his left hand, the second glove being delicately held between his fingers. Under his left arm he holds a fur trimmed hat, which is partially obscured by the large cuffs of his coat. From under his coat the hilt of a sword is just visible. He is portrayed in the movement of taking a pinch of snuff from a small shell shaped snuff box which he holds in his left hand. Completing the image is the large, powdered periwig, which sits atop his head. The engraver John Simon went on to produce a mezzotint

¹⁰⁰ Simon Callow, *Acting in Restoration Comedy* (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1991), 53.

¹⁰¹ Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, 5.2: 416.

¹⁰² Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, 107.

¹⁰³ Margaret K. Powell and Joseph Roach, ‘Big Hair’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004): 79–99. 80.



Figure 2.4

Colley Cibber. In the character of Lord Foppington: The Relapse; or Virtue in Danger c.1700 By Grisoni Guiseppe. Oil on canvas, 127 x 102 cm. The Garrick Club Collections, G0116.

of the portrait, which drew attention to the large periwig which frames Cibber's face and closely resembles not only the wig worn by Charles in Wright's portrait, but also the wig worn by Louis XIV in his portrait in coronation robes by Rigaud, with the wig worn at full length, resting over the shoulders. Performing predominately during the reigns of William and Mary, Cibber's evocation of the extravagant wig with its attendant associations with Stuart masculine identity can be seen to suggest not only the close association of the fop with Charles II, but also signals a shift in the comic approach to the fop. Following Charles' death, criticism of his extravagance could be heightened, therefore the increasingly flamboyant and excessiveness of the wigs can be said to reveal the start of a more critical attitude towards symbols of Stuart extravagance as embodied in the fop.

Playing the role of Sir Novelty Fashion in a play written by himself titled *Love's Last Shift, or the Fool in Fashion* (1696), Cibber's wig was so big that it has to be carried onto the stage in a sedan chair.¹⁰⁴ In his more famous enactment of Lord Foppington in Vanbrugh's *The Relapse*, the sequel to Cibber's *Love's Last Shift*, Foppington's wig is yet grown further, so much so that the following exchange ensues between Foppington and his periwig maker Foretop:

Foretop: My Lord, I have done what I defie any Prince in *Europe* t'-out-do; I have made you a Periwig so long, and so full of Hair, it will serve you for a Hat and Cloak in all Weathers.

Lord Foppington: 'Then thou hast made me thy Friend to Eternity; Come, comb it out.'¹⁰⁵

[...the exchange continues after an interlude by Young Fashion]

Lord Foppington: 'Gad's Curse; Mr. *Foretop*, you don't intend to put this upon me for a full Periwig?

Foretop: Not a full one, my Lord? I don't know what your Lordship may please to call a full one, but I have cram'd 20 Ounces of Hair into it.

Lord Foppington: What it may be by Weight, Sir, I shall not dispute; but by Tale, there are not 9 Hairs of a side.

¹⁰⁴ Powell and Roach, 'Big Hair', 80.

¹⁰⁵ Vanbrugh, *The Relapse*, 1.3: 137-142.

Foretop: O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! why, as Gad shall judge me, your Honour's Side-Face is reduc'd to the tip of your Nose.

Lord Foppington: My Side-Face may be in Eclipse for aught I know; but I'm sure, my Full-Face is like the Full-Moon.

Foretop: Heaven bless my Eye-sight – [*Rubbing his Eyes*] Sure I look through the wrong end of the Perspective, for by my Faith, an't please your Honour, the broadest place I see in your Face, does not seem to me to be two Inches diameter.

Lord Foppington: If it did, it wou'd be just two Inches too broad; Far a Periwig to a Man, shou'd be like a Mask to a Woman, nothing shou'd be seen but his Eyes —¹⁰⁶

Foretop creates a wig so big that only two inches of Foppington's face remains visible, and yet the size still does not meet Foppington's high and excessive standards. Foppington chastises Foretop, exclaiming that a periwig should leave nothing of the face visible except the eyes. The comic scene ridicules the fop's propensity for excess and exaggeration by focusing on one specific accessory. By taking the wig to farcical proportions, Vanbrugh obliterates any positive social implications attached to the wig. The wig no longer acts as an indicator of status or wealth in the case of the fop, but instead becomes a symbol of the figure's fashionable excess.

The implications of excess, and what it meant for an individual's morality, is explored in the verse *The Application to the Gallants* which concludes the anonymous poem *England's Vanity*. The anonymous author uses the example of the periwig to add a religious slant to debates over French imitation. The author states:

For pride of locks, and huffing Perriwigs.
(So Gideon once the men of Succoth taught)
Can you be p[...]oud of hair when Christ were Thorns ¹⁰⁷

The superfluosity of the wig is contrasted with the religious imagery of Christ wearing a crown of thorns. This rather damning indictment of the luxurious wig emphasizes the morally corrupting influence of fashion, revealing how the pursuit of fashion has led society to forget its religious obligations. The importance of this religious imagery is heightened by the

¹⁰⁶ Vanbrugh, *The Relapse*, 1:3: 156-179

¹⁰⁷ Compassionate conformist., *England's Vanity*, lines 142-144.

association of France with Catholicism. French fashion was damaging to not only notions of Englishness, but also to the national Church. The use of the term “pride” is also of importance: the periwig was one of the distinguishing accessories of a gentleman, an item which set the wearer apart from others. Therefore, while the author presents the wig as a sign of moral corruption, they also recognize the wig’s importance to its wearer as a symbol of social distinction. As such, the wig became a means through which authors and playwrights could not only evoke Charles’ perceived affinity to France, but also simultaneously endorse and challenge the fop’s use of fashion as a means of revealing his genteel status.

Conclusion

The anxieties surrounding Charles’ relationship with France in many respects mirror those addressed in the figure of the fop on stage: issues of national identity, constructs of masculinity, fears about religion. On the stage, these issues came to be exposed through a focus on the fop’s use of fashion as an expression of identity. Although Charles died in 1685, the concerns he brought to the fore through his affinity with France remained prevalent after his death, and as such lived on in the presence of the fop within comedies of manners into the early decades of the eighteenth century. As not just a comic figure, but a figure who reflected, embodied and criticized prevalent concerns evident in the court, the fop flourished in the Restoration as an expression of Stuart masculine identity. In particular, the fop engaged with concerns over French influence on Charles, court, and country. Expressed on the stage through a focus on fashionable excess, playwrights used the fop to explore and criticize issues of French emulation. Therefore, while undoubtedly a comic figure, the fop’s ridiculing was nevertheless rooted in real apprehensions surrounding the use of clothing to express both national identity and national loyalty.

Chapter Three

Dissecting the Fop: Locating Gentility in the Mind

The early eighteenth century was a period of relative stability within England.¹ The War of Spanish Succession (1702-1714) was going in England's favour and the Jacobite uprising (1715-1716) was defeated. While party jostling was a staple feature of internal politics in the period, at home and abroad England's commercial and trade ventures flourished as a result of an expansionist international policy. England's colonial ventures enabled expansion into new markets: as trade opportunities increased, so too did access to a larger variety of luxury items. Joseph Addison observed in the fifty-fifth issue of his periodical *The Spectator* (May 3, 1711) that, "[w]hen a Government flourishes in Conquests, and is secure from foreign Attacks, it naturally falls into all the Pleasures of Luxury".² Acknowledging the country's expanding colonial powers and success in foreign "Conquests", Addison draws attention to the ways in which the forced opening of trade with foreign markets can impact the nation's sense of identity. Allowing the government to stand in for the public more generally, Addison reveals how a nation secure in its foreign engagements and free from external threats can easily lapse into idleness and complacencies. For Addison, this ultimately manifests in the nation's increased propensity towards the consumption of luxury. Aligning luxury with avarice Addison warns of the danger of excessive consumption:

Avarice and Luxury very often become one complicated Principle of Action, in those whose Hearts are wholly set upon Ease, Magnificence, and Pleasure [...] At such times Men naturally endeavour to outshine one another in Pomp and Splendor, and having no Fears to alarm them from abroad, indulge themselves in the Enjoyment of

¹ Great Britain from 1707 when the Acts of Union unified England and Scotland. I will continue to refer to England rather than Great Britain in this chapter as despite the unification of the different nations, each country retained distinct ideas of their country's national identity throughout the eighteenth century.

² Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 234.

all the Pleasures they can get into their Possession; which naturally produces Avarice, and an immoderate Pursuit after Wealth and Riches.³

The increased propensity towards pursuits of luxury is ascribed by Addison to the feeling of security in the country as the population have “no Fears to alarm them from abroad” they are able to indulge in the accumulation of luxury.

A supporter of commerce, Addison nevertheless recognizes the connection between the consumption of luxury goods and a lapse in morality. Within their periodicals Addison and Richard Steele acknowledged that luxury promoted certain “Pleasures” which could also be constituted as vices, namely avarice and vanity:

Pleasures are very expensive, they put those who are addicted to them upon raising fresh Supplies of Money, by all the Methods of Rapaciousness and Corruption; so that Avarice and Luxury often become one complicated Principle of Action, in those whose Hearts are wholly set upon Ease, Magnificence, and Pleasure.⁴

Just as it is easy to fall into “all the Pleasures of Luxury”, so too is it easy to become “addicted” to those pleasures. To combat the plethora of vices which accompanied the growth of luxury, cultural commentators such as Addison and Steele utilized the periodical as a vehicle to explore the enervating effects of luxury. They also promoted a new code of gentlemanly conduct in relation to the development of commerce – namely politeness.⁵ For Addison and Steele, as well as others who ascribed to polite ideals, politeness was a set of moral and social values which were used to govern social interactions, including an individual’s speech, appearance, and behaviour.

Politeness provided an alternative conception of gentlemanly behaviour to that which had been presented on stage throughout the Restoration.⁶ The fop’s use of fashion was still

³ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1:234–35.

⁴ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 234.

⁵ See: Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783*. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1989); Lawrence E. Klein, ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’, *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 4 (December 2002): 869–98; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2001).

⁶ See: Mark S. Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre of Late Stuart London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

associated with notions of national identity and loyalty in the early years of the eighteenth century. However, concerns over the fop's use of fashion came to be increasingly tied up with issues of luxury consumption. In particular, authors emphasized the fop's excessive consumption of fashion to consider the impact of luxury on an individual's physical and psychological composition. The altered focus allowed authors to question the symbiotic relationship between an individual's characteristics, such as virtue and intellect, and their interaction with, and external display of, luxury. The fop became a key literary figure deployed as part of cultural attempts to challenge public perceptions of luxury consumption. Authors used the figure to ask broader questions about the influence of luxury, encouraging readers to consider whether the fop acted as an example of an innately flawed individual predisposed to vices associated with commerce, or whether it was through his interaction with luxury that the fop had become corrupted. Authors used the fop as a conduit to discuss issues of social and philosophical import in a popular medium, and in doing so, I contend, precipitated a shift in the treatment of the fop.

Critics such as Mark Dawson and Manushag N. Powell have noted the importance of both the theatre and periodicals in shaping conceptions of gentlemanly behaviour in the early eighteenth century.⁷ This chapter will consider how philosophical understanding of the formation of identity and character shaped how periodicalists present gentility in relation to the fop. The chapter will reflect on authors' engagement with politeness as a model of genteel behaviour suitable for the altered social and political dynamic of a commercial society, in order to consider how the fop complicated the notion of politeness by revealing its limitations. As a model of behaviour which recognized and encouraged engagement with luxury, politeness could easily be misinterpreted. The fop, therefore, functioned as an

⁷ Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre*; Manushag N. Powell, *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* (Lanham: Bucknell University Press, 2012).

example of how politeness could fail as an example of gentlemanly behaviour, by exposing the possibility for excessive engagement with luxury. Focusing on how the fop's corruption of politeness became rooted in the brain, I will discuss how the brain, as the point from which behaviour stems, became the dominant site for debates over how luxuries could corrupt a gentleman. The fop's 'empty head' I will argue, became expressive of the perceived enervating effects of luxury, and came to be applied to the most famous actor of the age, Colley Cibber. Focusing on luxury as a medium for expressing politeness and gentility, I address how Colley Cibber's engagement with luxury was framed as a breach of acceptable polite behaviour. Cibber was consistently represented as using luxury to present himself above his station. As an individual famous for his portrayal of fops, I will address the ways in which critics used Cibber's theatrical persona to attack his use of luxury by conflating him with the fops he portrayed on stage. In doing so, I explore how the fop as a literary character was deployed to expose the instability of concepts of identity by addressing the tension between the perception of foppishness as an innate set of characteristics, and foppishness as something which is performed. Philosophical discourses of identity, I believe, influenced periodicalists' engagement with the fop. The fop's engagement with luxury becomes a means through which periodicalists were able to expose and debate the complexity of ideas surrounding innate identity in the early eighteenth century.

Philosophy of Identity and Character

Issues of character intersected with philosophical explorations of personal identity in the eighteenth century. As Jane McIntyre has observed, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century "the literature on the problem of personal identity mushroomed".⁸

⁸ Jane L. McIntyre, 'Hume and the Problem of Personal Identity', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, ed. David Fate Norton and Jacqueline Taylor, Second (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 177.

Philosophers such as René Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, and Thomas Reid all contributed to the debates surrounding the mental constitution of character.⁹ These debates were not isolated to philosophical treatise but instead permeated popular discourse.

In the seventeenth century Descartes posited an understanding of the body as a “machine” made up of component parts that allow it to function.¹⁰ These parts include the body, the immaterial soul, passions, and actions. Descartes draws the link between these parts stating:

[W]e notice no subject that acts more immediately upon our soul than the body it is joined to, and that consequently we ought to think that what is a Passion in the former is commonly an Action in the latter.¹¹

This empiricist model of breaking down the body and mind in order to understand the truth of what constitutes the ‘self’ was central to the understanding of and debates surrounding identity in the period.¹² Although Descartes acknowledges that the soul and body are connected, what distinguishes his thesis from other philosophers is his assertion that the mind is not reliant on the body. Rather, for Descartes, man is “not a rational animal of Aristotelian tradition, but an incorporeal mind lodged mysteriously in a mechanical extended body”.¹³ Therefore, rather than the self being a composite of the soul and body, for Descartes, the self is the soul and mind, with the body acting as an extension of the self.

⁹ See: René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen Voss (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989); John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A.D. Woozley (Great Britain: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1964); David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford Philosophical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); David Hume, ‘Of National Characters’, in *David Hume Selected Essays*, ed. Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 113–25; Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, ed. Derek R. Brookes and Knud Haakonssen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002.).

¹⁰ Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 21.

¹¹ Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 19.

¹² Descartes uses mind and soul interchangeably

¹³ Jennifer Speake, Sarah Mitchell, and Alan Isaacs, eds., *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1979), 92.

Despite Descartes' claim that the soul can act independently of the body, he does locate the soul specifically in the physical confines of the brain:

even though the soul is joined to the whole body, there is nevertheless one part in [the body] in which [the soul] exercises its functions in a more particular way than in all the others [...] it is not the whole brain either, but only the innermost of its parts – a certain extremely small gland, situated in the middle of its substance, and so suspended above the duct.¹⁴

Following Descartes' lead, the general philosophical consensus in the early eighteenth century stipulated that the soul was most likely situated in the mind, or more specially the pineal gland. The language deployed by Descartes was adopted by Addison in *The Spectator* No. 275 (January 15, 1712), also known as *The Dissection of a Beau's Brain*, which was discussed briefly in Chapter One.¹⁵ The essay meticulously recounts a mock autopsy of a brain, only to find that the beau does not possess "a real Brain, but only something like it".¹⁶ Addison uses the beau as cultural shorthand for the dangers of luxury he identified in *The Spectator* No. 55, using the medical terminology of a dissection to address whether the beau is predisposed to the consumption of luxury or corrupted by the luxury he consumes:

The *Pineal Gland*, which many of our Modern Philosophers suppose to be the Seat of the Soul, smelt very strong of Essence and Orange-flower Water, and was encompassed with a kind of Horny Substance, cut into a thousand little Faces or Mirrours, which were imperceptible to the naked Eye, insomuch that the Soul, if there had been any here, must have been always taken up in contemplating his own Beauties.

We observed a long *Antrum* or Cavity in the *Sinciput*, that was filled with Ribbons, Lace and Embroidery, wrought together in a most curious Piece of Network, the Parts of which were likewise imperceptible to the naked Eye.¹⁷

Addison records how the soul is overwhelmed by the "very strong [smell] of Essence and Orange-flower Water". The reference directly recalls the dressing room scene from *The Man*

¹⁴ Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 36.

¹⁵ Beau and Fop were often used interchangeably in the eighteenth century. See introduction for more information.

¹⁶ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 571.

¹⁷ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2: 571.

of *Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676) discussed in Chapter Two, in which the following exchange occurs between the Gentleman Dorimant and his Valet de Chambre Handy:

Handy: Will you use the Essence, or Orange-Flower-Water?

Dorimant: I will smell as I do to-day, no Offence to the Ladies Noses.¹⁸

The rake Dorimant turns down the artificial smells in favour of his natural odour. Dorimant's choice to moderate his consumption in order to maintain a naturalness to his appearance contrasts the Beau of Addison's essay, whose soul is overpowered by the smell of "Essence and Orange-flower Water". Addison presents the beau's brain in a manner that recalls the language of Descartes. By creating the beau's brain out of luxuries, however, Addison challenges Descartes' separation of the body and mind. The beau's brain reflects the outward excesses of the figure, as Erin Mackie elucidates: "[t]he representation of the anatomized, objectified mind suggests a subjectivity with neither integrity or depth: the 'inside' is consumed by the 'outside,' the psyche displaced by the wares of the vendor".¹⁹ Or in other words, the soul of the beau becomes overwhelmed by the luxury items which he uses to adorn his body – such as the perfumed scents. In *The Spectator No. 275* Addison, therefore, can be seen to deploy the conceit of dissection to engage in contemporary philosophical debates. The beau's excessive consumption is satirized in a manner that prioritizes an understanding of the soul. Addison questions the morality of the beau as the thousands of tiny mirrors which make up the figure's "Pineal Gland" facilitate the beau's endless contemplation of the material at the expense of the spiritual.

Descartes' understanding of the passions' influence on the soul can aid a reading of Addison's presentation of the fop's morality. Descartes' earlier suggestion that it is through passions that an understanding of the self is achieved: "vice commonly springs from

¹⁸ George Etherege, 'The Man of Mode', in *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*, ed. David Womersley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 1.1: 418-421.

¹⁹ Erin Skye Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator* (Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 1998), 67.

ignorance” he declares, “and that it is those who know themselves least who are most apt to take pride in themselves and humble themselves more than they ought”.²⁰ These passions, however, can be managed “if one employed enough skill in training and guiding them”.²¹ In other words, an individual could alter their personal identity through training and guidance. What distinguished a “weaker soul”, according to Descartes, was the inability to manage their passions, a “weaker soul” was someone who became overwhelmed by their passions at the expense of their reasoning.²² He attributes the power of the passions to the external senses, and particularly to sight, which he states “is more highly regarded than all the other [passions]”.²³ Sight, it is suggested, can inspire delight, however this delight is fickle having not been challenged or subjected to intellectual consideration. Therefore, external factors can, through the passions, have an impact on an individual’s identity. It is for this reason that Descartes argues most ardently for monitoring the passions. The idea articulated by Descartes in his philosophical treatise, that the passions needed monitoring to ensure the protection of the individual’s soul, still held sway in the eighteenth century, as can be seen in the way periodicalists such as Addison deployed the fop as a medium for exploring identity.

As Addison’s portrayal of the beau’s brain showcased, Addison thought of the fop as an example of a “weaker soul”. The fop’s excessive consumption is predominantly presented as an example of unregulated passion, a desire provoked by the mere sight of an object with no consideration or reasoning behind the wish to obtain it. “Shallow Fops, who are govern’d by the Eye, and admire every thing that struts in Vogue” Steele declares in *The Spectator*

²⁰ Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 108.

²¹ Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 49.

²² Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 46.

²³ Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 65.

No.504 (Oct 8, 1712).²⁴ For Steele, the fop fails to demonstrate reason or taste, his accrurement of luxury items guided by the passions rather than discernment.

It is the regulation of the passions with which Addison and Steele claim to be most concerned in their periodical project *The Spectator*. The purpose of their work, they state in *No.16* (March 19, 1711), is “to enter into the Passions of Mankind, and to correct those depraved Sentiments that give Birth to all those little Extravagancies which appear in their outward Dress and Behaviour”.²⁵ Drawing on the passions, then, Addison and Steele bring to their periodical a philosophical ideology that connects the soul and body by revealing the potential to redress the passions’ impact on society. Addison and Steele, I argue, use the fop as a conduit through which they reveal how the passions influence perceptions of identity. By focusing on the fop’s outward displays of excess Addison and Steele showcase the potential physical manifestations of the passions. They suggest that an understanding of an individual’s identity is constructed through the outward signifiers of their passions: their actions, behaviours, and bodily deportment. For this reason, Addison and Steele emphasize the need to monitor and regulate the passions with the model of politeness, using the fop as an exemplar of what happens if the passions are not regulated and luxury is consumed to excess.

Politeness as a Model for Genteel Behaviour

Politeness was the outward expression of internal beliefs and ideals grounded in reason and moral virtue. Developing from the concept that identities were formed and located in the

²⁴ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 289.

²⁵ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 70.

brain, politeness prioritized a model of behaviour that could be learnt. Paul Langford described politeness in the following terms:

naturally associated with the possession of those goods which marked off the moderately wealthy from the poor [...] It also included the intellectual and aesthetic tastes which displayed the continuing advance of fashion in its broadest sense. But most of all it affected the everyday routing and rules of social life, from matters as trivial as the time at which one dined, and the way one ate one's dinner, to matters as important as the expectations and arrangements of partners in marriage. There were no shortage of manuals and advice on all such questions. The essence of politeness was often said to be that *je ne sais quoi* which distinguished the innate gentleman's understanding of what made for civilized conduct, but this did not inhibit others from seeking more artificial means of acquiring it.²⁶

In this definition of sorts, Langford captures the complexity and far-reaching influence of politeness. It was not only a form of moral behaviour and action: it was an ideology which was dependent on social status. As such politeness had strong material roots. Individuals were expected to acquire luxury goods to confirm their social status, a process which required them to possess a certain level of wealth. Emerging from the desire to police personal identity, politeness allowed people who possessed financial autonomy, to learn how to behave in a genteel manner. This was important in the context of the growing mercantile class.

The growing mercantile wealth of the period saw an increasing number of people in society laying claim to the title of "gentleman". As Klein has explained, the term "gentleman" became "more indeterminate than it had been and was failing to do the work which had earlier been its principal assignment: to distinguish a distinct group of society – marked by pedigree and land-ownership – from the rest".²⁷ In *The Tatler* No. 207 (August 5, 1710) Steele captures this shifting definition of "gentleman", noting that the growing mercantile class had as much a claim to the title as a courtier: "[t]he courtier, the Trader, and

²⁶ Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 71.

²⁷ Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', 876.

the Scholar, should all have an equal Pretension to the Denomination of a Gentleman”.²⁸ Drawing on the culture of politeness as the epitome of masculine behaviour Steele goes further suggesting that “[t]he Appellation of Gentleman is never to be affixed to a Man’s Circumstances, but to his Behaviour in them”.²⁹ For advocates of politeness, such as Steele, politeness purports to provide a levelling effect within society by allowing for a “deportmental rather than a hereditary or professional definition of gentility”.³⁰ Steele in *The Tatler* promoted the idea that anyone could lay claim to the title of gentility, as long as they behaved according to the dictates of politeness. Therefore, politeness could prove problematic: if anyone could learn to be polite, then it raised the question of how society was to distinguish between those of different social standings. How were individuals supposed to differentiate between the polite gentleman and the fop? This tension repeatedly played out in the discussion of politeness, especially in relation to politeness as a model of behaviour adopted by members of the mercantile class.

Despite its claim to universality, politeness was predominantly a model of behaviour developed for, and adopted by, the growing mercantile class.³¹ In the early eighteenth century, the mercantile class were an expanding group within society: in most cases they possessed large wealth but lacked the traditional signifiers of status, such as titles and land. Karen Harvey observes that “[I]n contrast to earlier models of civility, the polite gentleman came from the middling sort, not the aristocracy; politeness and commerce went hand in hand”.³² The “middling sort” as Harvey terms them, needed politeness to help cement their

²⁸ Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 99.

²⁹ Steele, *The Tatler*, 3: 99–100.

³⁰ David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 280.

³¹ For more information on the class implications of politeness see: Klein, ‘Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century’; Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*; Philip Carter, ‘Polite Persons: Character. Biography and the Gentleman’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 333–354.

³² Karen Harvey, ‘The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800’, *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 301.

new standing in society. Rosalind Carr further emphasizes the important distinction between the aristocratic model of masculinity and the roots of politeness in the “middling sorts”, stating that:

Since the Restoration, libertinism had been associated with the aristocratic rake, and his behaviour an assertion of social, as well as sexual power [...] Politeness, on the other hand, was typically associated with elite culture, but as a set of behavioural codes enacted in spaces such as spa towns and assembly rooms, it could be performed by professionals and middling sorts with financial means and leisure time. A powerful cultural ideal, politeness required courtesy and elegance in speaking, a generosity towards friends, and an easy sociability in company.³³

The majority of exponents and supporters of politeness came from the mercantile class whose wealth and lives were rooted in commerce. Politeness was the model through which those engaged with commerce learned to interact with luxury and their new-found wealth. As Powell indicates, “periodicals served a policing function with respect to popular manners”.³⁴ Periodicals, therefore, acted as both an advertisement for politeness and a conduct manual to achieve polite behaviours and manners.

As with any model of behaviour, there was the potential for the dictates to be misinterpreted or misapplied. Periodicalists, therefore, used their texts to reflect back to the reader appropriate and inappropriate models of behaviour while simultaneously offering advice for the growing mercantile class and chastising those who failed to engage successfully with their precepts. Carr notes the potential of politeness to become mutated: “there could be slippage between polite and libertine, so too could the polite man become a fop, and the fop a sodomite”.³⁵ Periodicalists suggested that there was a fine line between the different kinds of excess, and therefore it was believed that the fop’s fashionable excess could

³³ Rosalind Carr, ‘The Importance and Impossibility of Manhood: Polite and Libertine Masculinities in the Urban Eighteenth Century’, in *Nine Centuries of Man: Manhood and Masculinities in Scottish History*, ed. Lynn Abrams and Elizabeth Ewan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 63.

³⁴ Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 41.

³⁵ Carr, ‘The Importance and Impossibility of Manhood’, 72.

be interpreted as indicative of sexual excess, a concept which will be the focus of Chapter Four of this thesis. The possibility of fluidity and confusion between the different character types Carr identifies in part, then, explains the desire of periodicalists to clearly categorize and delineate the characteristics of each individual character type through accounts of their behaviour in an array of different social situations. By making characters and their correspondent characteristics easily identifiable, periodicalists were able to not only promote positive models of gentility but facilitated their own use of satire by educating readers to recognize different types with ease. That is to say, periodicalists were able to deploy the fop to showcase the perils of taking the dictates of politeness to extremes, and thus used the figure as an example of failed polite ideals.

“Born within us”: Gentility and Interiority

Despite politeness’ proliferation throughout textual works, the courtly model of gentility that prioritized family lineage over morals, still held some sway within society. While both models accentuated innate qualities as central to gentility, courtly gentility promoted “biological essentialism” locating value in “the bloodline” and familial facial and bodily features, which were emphasised by external signifiers.³⁶ Politeness, on the other hand, promoted reason and educational advancement of internal qualities as expressed through the adoption of a specific code of behaviour. The external projection of these beliefs did not just manifest in behaviours. Polite models of gentility, like the court model, recognized the role of luxury in expressions of status, however, politeness prioritized reason and restraint in the individual’s use of luxury. It was this distinction which precluded the fop from the model of politeness advocated by Addison and Steele. It also rendered him a figure representative of

³⁶ Michael McKeon, ‘Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28, no. 3 (1995): 303.

the consequences if luxury was engaged with excessively, indiscriminately and therefore incorrectly.

While excessive consumption came to be associated with the aristocracy, as seen through the popularization of the fop on the Restoration stage, the trait was incompatible with polite models of behaviour which demanded restraint and sense in relation to luxurious consumption as evidence of an individual's moral virtue. This idea is captured by the anonymous author of *The Character of the Beaux* (1696). The author observes that "A modest sober Man minds his interiour parts, more than his exterior; yet goes neatly, mixt with a little Gentility, though not Extravagancy".³⁷ The external is not dismissed, but the interior takes on new prominence in considerations of gentility. It is the "Extravagancy", the excess, of the beau which excludes him from the polite world as he fails to engage correctly with luxury.

Despite being a model of behaviour predicated on the ability of the individual to learn to be polite, the fop provided an example of how not everyone was successful in their attempts to adopt polite dictates. Klein reveals that a "consciousness of form, a concern with the manner in which actions were performed, was perhaps the most important component of the meaning of politeness".³⁸ While politeness could be learned, it had to be supported by a natural and inherent morality and good sense. In the first issue of Edward Ward's monthly periodical *The London Spy* (November, 1698), the reader is introduced to an acquaintance of the spy; a physician. The acquaintance is the spy's guide to London life: he offers commentary and social observation on some of the different aspects of society. One of the

³⁷ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux, in Five Parts ... to Which Is Added The Character of a Jacobite / Written by a Young Gentleman.*, (London printed : [s.n.], 1696), 44.

³⁸ Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', 874.

first groups the acquaintance introduces the spy to are some of his patients, who have congregated in a tavern. The spy recounts the experience in detail:

Upon our entrance they all started up, and on a sudden screwed themselves into so may antic postures that had I not seen them first erect, I should have queried with myself whether I was fallen into the company of men or monkeys.

This academical fit of wriggling agility was almost over before I rightly understood the meaning on't, and found at last they were only showing one another how many sorts of apes' gestures and fops' cringes had been invented since the French dancing-masters undertook to teach our English gentry to make scaramouches of themselves, and how to entertain their poor friends and pacify their needy creditors with compliments and congees.³⁹

The fops' bodies become disfigured in their attempts to reveal the extent of their politeness and gentility. The unnatural positions the fops manage to contort their bodies into are treated by the spy as expressive of their primitive status: they are "apes" and "monkeys", rather than men. The fop's deformed figure becomes reflective of his lack of internal virtues or intellect as he surrounds himself with an assortment of villainous men who "are seldom free from clap, pox, thumps, cuts, or bruises".⁴⁰ The account reminds the reader that although the interior is important, gentility can still be understood through considerations of the body's externality, its form, shape, and movement. As well as recording the fop's impolite behaviours, the Spy also analyses the figure's performance of politeness: he explains how the fops' "academical fit of wriggling" was a tactic the figure developed to "pacify their needy creditors with compliments and congees" rather than repay their debts. The Spy, therefore, acts as a guide for readers, teaching them how to decode, and see through, similar acts of gentility and politeness, to expose the person and intention behind the performance.

The concept that the external body reflected the internal is further explored in Ward's character of *A Beau*. Ward describes the fop's body as "but a poor stuffing of a rich case, like bran in a lady's pincushion, that when the outside is stripped off, there remains nothing that's

³⁹ Edward Ward, *The London Spy*, ed. Paul Hyland (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1993), 1: 12-13.

⁴⁰ Ward, *The London Spy*, 1: 17-18.

valuable. His head is a fool's egg which lies hid in a nest of hair. His brains are the yolk, which conceit has addled".⁴¹ While the fop is presented as having a "rich" exterior, Ward reveals the fop's brain is in fact rotten, comparing it to a "fool's egg" and a "yolk". Ward reveals the ways in which the fop uses superficial luxuries to try and mask his insufficiencies, exposing the fop as devoid of any intrinsic value. The fop attempts to cultivate a polite persona, presenting himself as unaffected and intellectually capable. Ward reveals that the fop can be found in the coffee-house "reading only for fashion's sake, and not for information".⁴² Despite being empty-headed, the fop is presented as always acting in accordance with fashion, whether that be through his display of a "rich case" of clothing or visiting fashionable haunts such as the coffee-house. The fop is presented as having to pretend to read, whether that is because he cannot understand the information, or because as Addison had suggested his head was already filled with ribbon and lace, is left open for speculation, but what is clear is that the fop's brain has been corrupted by luxury and left "empty" of all useful knowledge.

In a similar manner to Ward, Addison also contests the idea that gentility is something that can be learned by just anyone. In *The Spectator No. 169* (September 13, 1711) Addison draws on the notion of internal significations of gentility, observing that good-nature is "born within us" and is something which "Education may improve but not produce".⁴³ By recognizing that individuals possess an innate good sense which can be improved through, though not created by, education, Addison suggests a distinction between the truly polite gentleman whose behaviour stems from moral integrity, and those, such as the fop, who attempt to project politeness without the necessary moral grounding. In his reflection on the moral root of behaviour, Addison draws on an emerging discourse which attempts to explain

⁴¹ Ward, *The London Spy*, 16: 295.

⁴² Ward, *The London Spy*, 16: 296.

⁴³ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2: 165–66.

gentility in terms of interior virtues and exterior expressions of vices. John Locke's influential essay *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) revealed a concern for the interior aspects of gentlemanly behaviour, he observes:

He that is a good, a virtuous and able Man, must be made so within. And therefore, what he is to receive from Education, what is to sway and influence his Life, must be something put into him betimes; Habits woven into the very Principles of his Nature; and not counterfeit Carriage, and dissembled Out-side, put on by Fear, only to avoid the present Anger of a Father, who perhaps may disinherit him.⁴⁴

Locke connects the mind and morality with gentlemanly conduct. For Locke, morality and behaviour can be shaped through education: he goes on to state one “must take care to plant it [civility] early [in...] the Mind”.⁴⁵ A man's behaviour should stem from an innate goodness which is nurtured by education, it should not be “counterfeit” merely to suit his situation. The concern with an innate morality which informs behaviour was developed by Addison and Steele, who promoted an education in politeness as a means of improving an innate gentlemanly virtue and moral character.

The “empty-head” of the Fop

Addison and Steele were both “pro-commerce”, according to Emma Clery. However, they use the fop as an example of the danger of *excessive* consumption in order to support luxury while condemning its associated vices.⁴⁶ By establishing the vices as innate human faults, Addison and Steele were able to promote an ideal of behaviour which if followed was suggested to protect from the potential corrupting influence of luxury. In issue *No. 16* (March

⁴⁴ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 110.

⁴⁵ Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 124–25.

⁴⁶ E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 5.

19, 1711) of *The Spectator*, Addison clearly articulate their position with regards to the vices of luxury:

Foppish and fantastic Ornaments are only Indications of Vice, not criminal in themselves. Extinguish Vanity in the Mind, and you naturally retrench the little Superfluities of Garniture and Equipage. The Blossoms will fall themselves, when the Root that nourishes them is destroyed.⁴⁷

Rather than dealing with the material manifestations of the vice, Addison claims to address the source of the problem, which he identifies as “Vanity in the Mind”. But this vice is not a singular phenomenon. Addison makes clear that this is a fault evident in many and his aim is to “consider the Crime as it appears in a Species, not as it is circumstanced in an Individual [...] aim every Stroak at a collective Body of Offenders”.⁴⁸ To achieve this aim, Addison deploys the fop as a figurehead for the “Species” who fall foul of “Vanity in the Mind” and thereby exhibit “Superfluities of Garniture and Equipage”.

The potential impact of luxury came to be expressed with reference to the fop’s intellectual capacity. The emphasis placed on the fop’s brain, or lack thereof, signalled a (temporary) return to the traditional etymology of the word ‘fop’. Authors played on the connotations of the traditional meaning of the term to express the adverse impact of luxury on an individual’s intellect, which in turn resulted in the individual’s excessive consumption habits, as his lack of intellect impedes him from a regulated and reasoned engagement with commerce. As Clery explains, “[t]he belief that the growth of commerce will result in social and political benefits is shadowed and defined by the alternative possibility, sometimes implicit, sometimes articulated”.⁴⁹ The fop represents the “alternative possibility” that Clery points to, the possibility for luxury to become not only a sign of intellectual failings but also to become a source of further intellectual and moral corruption. Periodical writers offered the

⁴⁷ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 70.

⁴⁸ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 1: 72.

⁴⁹ Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England*, 5–6.

fop as the key example of the negative potential of luxury to overwhelm and corrupt the brain (as Addison does in his *Dissection* essay discussed earlier), and in doing so, they provided an example against which the correct manner of engagement with luxury could be defined.

In particular, periodicalists drew on the trope of the brain to reveal the degenerating impact of luxury on the body. Due to the increased access to luxury, and its shifting definitions, the consumption of luxury was increasingly connected with intellectual capacity through a growing emphasis on knowledge: fashion was, according to Dena Goodman, presented as “a function of knowledge rather than wealth, and gave power to those who carried the authority of taste”.⁵⁰ Similarly to polite behaviours, taste could be learned. The focus on learned behaviours further emphasized the connection between the brain and luxury consumption. In relation to the fop, it raised questions as to whether the fop was inherently foolish and therefore incapable of learning these accepted behaviours, or whether the attraction of luxury was too addictive and therefore made him foolish.

The sense of balance necessary for the projection of polite ideals is captured in *The Spectator No.150* (August 22, 1711). Eustace Budgell draws the connection between outward displays of luxury and intellect, noting that: “The Medium between a Fop and a Sloven is what a Man of Sense would endeavour to keep”.⁵¹ Budgell’s use of the fop comically illustrates wider concerns regarding clothing being indicative of character. The fop’s penchant for excess reveals an over-emphasis upon consumption, an inability to think beyond the superficial. The sloven sits at the other end of the scale and represents a lack of any kind of emphasis upon the material or external. By pairing these two figures of extremes, Budgell suggests a man of sense resembles a balance between style and substance. In this instance,

⁵⁰ Dena Goodman, ‘Furnishing Discourses: Readings of a Writing Desk in Eighteenth Century France’, in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, ed. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 77.

⁵¹ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2: 91.

“sense” applies to both the man’s character and his intellect, suggesting that both the fop and sloven, despite being on opposing ends of the scale, represent a failed understanding of – and engagement with – luxury. They both fail to demonstrate taste or good sense.

The fop’s treatment at the hands of periodicals was driven by anxieties stimulated by the increased access to luxury and new mercantile wealth and what this meant for the constructs of gentility. As Carter surmises: “[a] staple feature of satirical and conduct literature, the fop was a quintessential eighteenth-century character embodying current discussions over the impact of polite society on standards of manhood”.⁵² In other words, the fop acted as a model of failed gentility. A “vain, self-obsessed character who failed to live up to the goodwill, ease and integrity of the polite gentleman”, the fop served as an example of unregulated excess.⁵³ Attacks on the fop, concentrated upon his excessive consumption as expressive of an internal failing of character, soul, and intellect. Periodicals and pamphlets offered up the fop as an example of un-masculine and immoral behaviour so they could subsequently offer an example of the correct means of social interactions and identifying gentility.

This method of presenting the correct mode of gentlemanly behaviour was engaged by Addison and Steele who “used the resources of print culture to disseminate polite moralisms to a broad audience”.⁵⁴ In *The Spectator No.155* (August 28, 1711) the reader is given the story of a young fop imposing on a young shop assistant:

a young Fop cannot buy a Pair of Gloves, but he is at the same Time straining for some ingenious Ribaldry to say to the young Woman who helps them on. It is no small Addition to the Calamity, that the Rogues buy as hard as the plainest and modestest Customers they have; besides which they loll upon their Counters half an

⁵² Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 11.

⁵³ Harvey, ‘The History of Masculinity’, 301.

⁵⁴ Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2.

Hour longer than they need, to drive away other Customers, who are to share their Impertinencies with the Milliner, or go to another Shop.⁵⁵

The essay serves a didactic function, exposing the fop's inappropriate behaviour, before explaining its impropriety. Not only is the fop causing offence and affront to the shop assistant through his inappropriate manner of speaking, he also loses the shop custom through his extended presence and his minute purchases. To address this type of behaviour, the essay goes on to offer an alternative and improved model of conduct:

A Woman is naturally more helpless than the other Sex's and a Man of Honour and Sense should have this in his View in all Manner of Commerce with her. Were this well weighed, Inconsideration, Ribaldry, and Nonsense would not be more natural to entertain Women with than Men; and it would be as much Impertinence to go into a Shop of one of these young Women without buying, as into that of any other Trader.⁵⁶

Addison reveals the relationship between conduct and commerce. The expansion of trade and access to luxury had created new types of social interactions which required governing, Addison indicates that "sense" is the best means of governing one's behaviour in these new situations. The terms "honour" and "sense" are used as the primary indicators of gentlemanly behaviour – both traits the fop is portrayed as lacking. In a society where the consumption of luxury was vastly increasing, the fop became an example of how not to engage with luxury. In particular, authors deployed the fop as an example of the ways in which claims to gentility were impacted and defined by a person's interaction with luxury, locating the vice not in the objects themselves but in man's interactions with them.

The correlation between a lack of intellect and an erroneous sense of what is appropriate became almost commonplace in discussions of the fop as the eighteenth century progressed. An article in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (November, 1731), titled *Of Wit, Humour, Madness and Folly*, notes the "monstrous and irregular minds" which plague society. The author attributes the irregular minds of "Fops, Half-wits, Pedants and

⁵⁵ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2:108.

⁵⁶ Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, 2:109–10.

Coxcombs” as well as their “Oddness” to a physical deformity in the make-up of their brains, or more particularly “an improper Length, Size or Situation of a Fibre, from a disproportion’d Humour; or an immoderate Ferment in the Composition”.⁵⁷ Despite the nearly twenty year gap between this publication and Addison’s essay *The Dissection of a Beau’s Brain*, the author draws on similar tropes in his discussion of the fop, namely, he evokes the brain along with deploying a medical rhetoric. The author reduces the fop’s proclivity and social exuberance to a physical inadequacy in the body, but whereas Addison’s fop is deformed by luxury, in this instance the fop is presented as being predetermined a fool by the physical deformity of his brain. Exploiting wider debates about the relationship between excessive consumption and display, both the article and essay explore concerns about the way in which over-engagement with luxury is both inscribed by and inscribed on the brain.

An article in *The Gentleman’s Magazine: or Monthly Intelligencer* published in the same year (August, 1731), also developed the idea of the fop’s perceived lack of intellect by connecting the mind to issues of taste. The author notes that: “They are a parcel of spruce powder’d Foplings, with their Hair tuck’d under a Tortoiseshell Comb; their Sleeves flic’d up above their Elbows, a Gold Headed Cane in one Hand, an Agate Box in t’other, with a Nose full of Snuff, and a Head full of – *Nothing*”.⁵⁸ The emphasis on the fop’s empty head accentuates, and in part explains, the fop’s social behaviours and excessive fashionable consumption. Each item taken in isolation, the “Gold Headed Cane”, the “Tortoiseshell Comb”, and “Agate Box” have a practical function: the cane acts as a support for walking, the comb is used to tidy wigs, and a box is used for storage. However, the adjectives attached to the objects reflect their social function in so far as they express the individual’s

⁵⁷ Anon, ‘Of Wit, Humour, Madness and Folly.’, *The Gentleman’s Magazine: Or, Monthly Intelligencer*, November 1731, 1, 11 edition, 490.

⁵⁸ Anon, ‘Human Reason, and Fops’, *The Gentleman’s Magazine: Or, Monthly Intelligencer*, August 1731, 1, 8 edition, 344. “Foplings” is a reference to the infamous fop Sir Fopling Flutter from George Etherege’s 1676 play *The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter*.

participation in, and accrue of, expensive luxury items. Rather than being signifiers of personal preference and taste, the objects lose both their practical and social function. The surplus of fashionable items, emphasized through the listing process, reduces the objects to “Nothing”, just as the fop’s lack of understanding of commerce, as evidenced through his excessive consumption, results in his brain being presented as containing “Nothing”.

The renewed focus on education in the formation of gentility allowed for an increased emphasis on intellect and reason in discussions of the polite gentleman. Indeed, the primary internal qualities evoked by critics to differentiate between the polite gentleman and alternative models of gentility, were intellect and reason. An anonymous poem in *Grongar-Hill London Magazine and Monthly Chronologer* (November, 1736) eloquently summarizes the matter:

Shame on the dull, who think the soul looks less,
Because the body wants a glitt’ring dress.
It is the mind’s for-ever bright attire,
That mind’s embroid’ry that the wise admire⁵⁹

The author evokes the external in order to emphasize the internal. The “minds for-ever bright attire” is prioritized over the “body”, and the author warns of the folly of dismissing a “soul” because the body is not adorned in “glitt’ring dress”. By accentuating the mind and soul and revealing that the external are only secondary to the internal qualities, the author builds on the growing discourse surrounding the identification of gentility and the new function of luxury within discourses of politeness. Just as an individual’s intellect is represented as reflective of their moral capacity, so the opposite is true, with the “dull” failing to recognize true moral worth. The author exposes a propensity within society to misguidedly place too much value upon the external, a society which conflates excess and splendour in dress with individual worth. By emphasizing the importance of the internal, politeness helped to redress the

⁵⁹ Anon, ‘To Richard Savage Esq; Son of the Late Earl of Rivers. By the Author of Grongar-Hill. A Poem.’, in *Grongar-Hill London Magazine and Monthly Chronologer*, November 1736, 5 edition, 638.

tendency to view clothing as an indicator of a person's value. The author is able to simultaneously promote engagement with commerce through the evocation of the vocabulary of luxury and admonish the associated vices such as excess, vanity and foolishness.

The association of politeness with moral dictates and the soul more generally had an enduring influence on debates over gentility and the understanding of how internal characteristics manifested themselves in outward expressions of identity. The courtly model of civility is depicted in an anonymously written text, *The Polite Academy* (1768), as “mostly surface without Depth”; it is expressed solely through external signifiers such as objects and clothing; this is contrasted with politeness which is linked to the “Soul”.⁶⁰ By connecting commerce with the soul and the soul's influence on behaviour, proponents of politeness proposed “a synthesis of inner and outer refinement”, promoting the idea of the internal qualities' importance to constructs of gentility and critiquing the perceived superficiality and immorality of aristocratic society.⁶¹

The interrelation between inner and outer refinement permeates literature throughout the century: Samuel Johnson in his periodical *The Rambler* (1750-1752) also utilized the concept of luxury to signal the importance of balancing internal and external qualities in shaping one's identity. In a letter submitted to *The Rambler* (21 May 1751), the writer Misocapelus states:

I began soon to repent the expense, by which I had procured no advantage, and to suspect that a shining dress, like a weighty weapon, has no force in itself, but owes all its efficacy to him that wears it.⁶²

⁶⁰ Anon, *The Polite Academy; or, School of Behaviour for Young Gentlemen and Ladies. Intended as a Foundation for Good Manners and Polite Address, in Masters and Misses.*, The fourth edition. (London, 1768), 2. The text was first published in 1762, however the first chapter titled 'Of Knowing Your Condition' in the first edition was replaced in the fourth edition by a first chapter titled 'Good Breed and Politeness' which is what this quote is taken from.

⁶¹ Carter, 'Polite Persons', 335.

⁶² Samuel Johnson, No. 123 *The Rambler* (London: John Payne, 1751), 68.

Drawing on the relationship between soul and body in the pursuit for identity, Misocapelus reveals his disappointment at the inability of clothing to secure advantage when unsupported by an inner quality of the wearer. Identity, it is suggested, while judged through external representations of the self, is also reliant on the internal qualities of the self which are assessed, according to Descartes, through the person's actions and passions. This sentiment is further expressed in *The Connoisseur* No. 8 (March 1754):

As in this fashionable age there are many of Lord *Foppington*'s opinion, that a book should be recommended by its outside to a man of quality and breeding, it is incumbent on all authors to appear as well drest as possible, if they expect to be admitted into polite company: yet we should not lay too much stress on the decorations of our work.⁶³

Evoking the vain and conceited Lord Foppington from John Vanbrugh's play *The Relapse, or, Virtue in Danger* (1696) who, as discussed in Chapter Two, relies on clothing and a brought title to signal his worth, the author of the periodical essay challenges the assumption that appearance necessarily equates with value. Addressing the need to balance external and internal qualities, the author challenges the notions of what constitutes identity, emphasising the importance of internal qualities over the outer trappings which can draw the eye.

Playing the Fop: Cibber, Gentility and the Acting Profession

The concerns evident in periodicalists' dealings with fops – the projection of status and gentility through the use of luxury, the correlation between conspicuous consumption of luxury and a lack of intellect, and the ways in which luxury consumption shaped identity – were all evident in discussions of the actor in the eighteenth century. A staple figure on the eighteenth-century stage, Colley Cibber became a focal point within many of these discussions by his contemporaries. Remembered to posterity as the fops he portrayed on

⁶³ George Colman and Bonnell Thornton, eds., 'Untitled Item', *The Connoisseur*; London, no. 8 (March 1754): 48.

stage, critics have questioned Cibber's apparent proficiency for performing the role of a fop.⁶⁴ Contemporaries conflated his performances of fops with his identity as an individual, suggesting that Cibber's portrayal of fops was successful because he was one. As an actor who gained prestige and wealth through his profession, Cibber was able to enhance his social status and deploy politeness as a means of fashioning himself as a gentleman. Cibber's offstage attempts to enhance his social position therefore were conflated with his onstage performances of fops. By exploring the ways in which Cibber was conflated with the fops he portrayed on stage, this section addresses how politeness and consumption became tied to understandings of intellect and social climbing. The desire to label Cibber as a fop, and the ease with which this could be done, I suggest, reveals some of the ways in which the fop was deployed as a means of policing gentility.

Colley Cibber was one of the most successful actors of the early-eighteenth century, performing at least one hundred and forty-eight advertised roles throughout his career.⁶⁵ Alongside this he was also a popular playwright whose plays including *Love's Last Shift, or the Fool in Fashion* and *Richard III*, were performed over three thousand times between 1696 and 1800.⁶⁶ He managed the Drury Lane Theatre for over twenty years, with none of the rebellions which plagued both his predecessors and successors.⁶⁷ He also spent the last twenty-seven years of his life as the Poet Laureate. Despite this prominent and varied career Cibber has come down through history as one thing – an “empty-headed” fop. Elaine McGirr offers two significant reasons for the modern perception of Cibber as a fop. Firstly, she

⁶⁴ Colley Cibber's performance as Sir Novelty Fashion in the play *Love's Last Shift, or The Fool in Fashion* (1696) helped establish his acting career. John Vanbrugh enlarged the character to the title of Lord Foppington in the play *The Relapse, or, Virtue in Danger* (1696) and Cibber once again took on the role.

⁶⁵ Elaine McGirr, *Partial Histories: A Reappraisal of Colley Cibber* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 15.

⁶⁶ McGirr, *Partial Histories*, 11.

⁶⁷ For more information on the theatre rebellions and how they shaped Cibber's later management of Drury Lane see: Helene Koon, *Colley Cibber: A Biography* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1986).

observes the limited iconography which has survived of Cibber, stating “[w]e remember Cibber as a fop because he was painted as one”.⁶⁸ One of the most famous images of Cibber is Guiseppie Grisoni’s *Colley Cibber as Lord Foppington* (Figure 3.1). Like this portrait, a painted plaster bust of Cibber (Figure 3.2) which is now held at the National Portrait Gallery, also depicts Cibber in a foppish light: he is wearing a luxurious gown and matching head cap, and also appears to be presented wearing powdered makeup. Second, McGirr indicates that the formation of the canon in favour of Cibber’s adversarial contemporaries Alexander Pope and Henry Fielding has influenced scholarly interpretation of Cibber and his career. The satirical presentations of the likes of Pope and Fielding have, according to McGirr “obscured Cibber’s character”, reducing Cibber, the individual, the actor, manager, poet, playwright, and family man, to the foppish roles he played.⁶⁹

Pope notoriously crowned Cibber the King of Dunces in the fourth edition of his mock-heroic poem *The Dunciad* (1743). Bays stands in for Cibber, whom readers would have remembered from Cibber’s frequent portrayal of the foppish character of the same name in George Villiers’ *The Rehearsal* (1671). Throughout the poem, Pope ties Cibber’s lack of intellect to what he perceives is Cibber’s false claim to gentility. As McGirr has noted: “Pope resignifies ‘Cibberian’, connecting it to, even conflating it with, a dangerous combination of madness, emptiness, and artifice”.⁷⁰ Pope does this by evoking Cibber’s genealogy, but rather

⁶⁸ McGirr, *Partial Histories*, 26.

⁶⁹ McGirr, *Partial Histories*, 6.

⁷⁰ McGirr, *Partial Histories*, 4.



Figure 3.1

Colley Cibber as Lord Foppington, c.18th Century. By Giuseppe Grisoni. Engraving, printed ink on paper, 22.5 x 14.5 cm. The Victoria and Albert Museum, S.1467-2012.



Figure 3.2

Colley Cibber, c.1740. By Sir Henry Cheere, 1st Bt. Painted plaster bust, 690 x 510 mm. The National Portrait Gallery, NPG 1045.

than rooting it in Gaius Cibber, Cibber's father, Pope instead ties Cibber's lineage to his father's most famous sculptures, "Melancholy" and "Raving Madness", which stood on display outside Bedlam Hospital:

Where o'er the gates, by his fam'd father's hand
Great Cibber's brazen, brainless brothers stand;⁷¹

Just as the statues are "brainless" and representative of an unsound mental capacity, Cibber's connection to them is used as an indication of his own shared defective intellect as he is shown to be no different from his father's creations.

Throughout the poem *The Dunciad*, Pope conflates intellect with familial identity in order to undermine Cibber's claim to a polite and genteel identity. Pope constantly reminds the reader of Cibber's lowly start in life by revealing the ability of Dulness to infect all social strata:

'Till rais'd from booths, to Theatre, to Court,
Her seat imperial Dulness shall transport⁷²

In what can be read as a pointed attack on Cibber, Pope depicts Dulness as facilitating social climbing, rising from the brothels of Drury lane, to the Theatre, and up into the courts.

Although Cibber could not be said to have dwelled in brothels, he in all likelihood would have visited them, and his transition from theatre actor, playwright and manager to socializing in court circles through his role as Poet Laureate was one often commented on. Exploiting Cibber's renown as an actor recognized for his portrayal of fops, Pope deploys tropes associated with the fop, such as the figure's perceived lack of intelligence, to challenge representations of Cibber as a member of elite social circles.

Pope's conflation of lack of intellect and the fop proved a successful means of challenging Cibber's identity as a member of elite social circles. By presenting Cibber as a

⁷¹ Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books*, ed. Valerie Rumbold (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 102. Book 1, lines 31-32.

⁷² Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books*, 256. Book 3, lines 299-300.

fop, his critics subscribed to the notion that gentility was not something which could be learned, but rather something innate. This was particularly pertinent in relation to Cibber due to his profession as an actor and contemporary debates surrounding the actor's role. For eighteenth-century theatre critic John Hill, the ability to be absorbed by the character was integral to an actor's skill, and the successful presentation of character on stage. Hill states that the player "is never to lose sight of this great point, that his private sentiments and character are to be hid behind those of the character he portrays".⁷³ However, as Powell explains, eighteenth-century audiences did not always maintain the distinction between actor and character. While the success of an actor's portrayal was supposed to be perceived as a sign of skill "rather than an attempt to deceive", audiences did not "always correctly make this distinction, and sometimes insist on the inflection of a character's past roles (or the actor's real life)".⁷⁴ This is a prominent issue at stake with Cibber: less than twenty per cent of his stage roles could be considered fops, and one of his most famous depictions was the villainous Richard III in his adaptation of Shakespeare. Yet contemporary critics as well as modern critics have tended to overlook Cibber's diversity as an actor and associate him solely with the fops he played.⁷⁵

The issue of imitation was one of the dominant concerns in the theatre debates of the early eighteenth century. Critics utilized the theory of interiority to argue both for and against the regulation of the stage. As Dawson eloquently explains: "[t]hose who opposed the playhouse subscribed fervently to the ideal of the intrinsic superiority of the gentleman-born and the theatre's ability to unmask gentility as a contestable process of cultural impersonation was a main motive for Collier and many of his supporters".⁷⁶ The theatre, therefore, was

⁷³ John Hill, *The Actor: A Treatise on the Art of Playing. Interspersed with Theatrical Anecdotes, Critical Remarks on Plays, and Occasional Observations on Audiences*. (London, 1750), 95.

⁷⁴ Powell, *Performing Authorship*, 9.

⁷⁵ McGirr, *Partial Histories*, 15.

⁷⁶ Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre*, 213.

perceived as dangerous because it challenged ‘natural’ distinctions and hierarchies by suggesting that genteel qualities were not naturally ascribed but rather culturally acquired: “The theatre was deemed ‘immoral’ because it could raise doubts in the minds of spectators about the legibility of social distinctions”.⁷⁷ By tying notions of gentility to internal qualities, critics therefore believed they could distinguish between imitators and gentlemen of high status. The debate over distinguishing the actor from the gentleman came to define both Cibber’s career and his subsequent representation throughout history as he was depicted as foppish due to his attempts to imitate, and claim, the genteel status that his successful career and the wealth he acquired entitled him to.

In a manner similar to that seen with discussions of the fop, John Dennis, a prominent theatre critic and Cibber’s contemporary, drew on the idea of intellect in order to distinguish between the actor and the genteel roles they played. According to Dennis, actors “have not the understanding and judgement of ordinary gentlemen” and they should be “encourag’d and esteem’d as Actors, not as Gentlemen, nor as Persons who have a Thousand times their Merit”.⁷⁸ Dennis is clear in his distinction: actors are playing a part, but they are not the same as those they portray. Although actors may appear to have the external qualities of a gentleman (through deportment, clothing and speech), their upbringing and internal qualities in the form of their intellect preclude them from gentility. An article in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* (June, 1733) titled *The Case of the Patentees and Players of Drury-Lane* takes this argument further. Written with the intent to offer a solution “that may please both Parties, and at the same Time promote the publick Good” after a falling out between the managers and actors of Drury Lane which resulted in the theatre being closed for several months, the article

⁷⁷ Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre*, 214.

⁷⁸ John Dennis, *The Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar, Call’d by Himself Sole Monarch of the Stage in Drury-Lane; and His Three Deputy-Governors. In Two Letters to Sir John Edgar*. (London, 1720), 7, 9.

addressed the issue of class and the stage.⁷⁹ The author suggests that the low status and intellect of actors should in fact disqualify them from participation on the stage:

As to the Managers, they have now an Opportunity of raising the Dignity, and supporting the Decency of the Stage. The Manner in which it has been hither-to supply'd, by taking Persons of the lowest, and most profligate Characters, is, no doubt, the Reason why Gentlemen of Sense and Learning prefer Starving, to a comfortable Subsistence in so ill Company. But this Evil, thus happily removed, 'tis probable the University will soon supply us with a regular and judicious Company of Players at much less Expence.⁸⁰

The author distinguishes between “Gentlemen of Sense and Learning” and the “profligate Characters” of actors. While the author associates the gentleman with terms connected with intellect – “University”, “Sense”, “Learning” – the actor is subject to a lexicon which has more negative connotations, for instance, “profligate” and “ill Company”. Once again, the gentleman is distinguished from the “lowest” sorts, in this case the actor, through rhetoric that reflects on his mental capacities.

Cibber’s contemporaries therefore were able to exploit Cibber’s association with fops to explore the concern over the actor’s lack of intellect and genteel imitation. The trope of the “empty head” is applied to Cibber in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* (November, 1734). Like the fop, Cibber is revealed to be lacking a brain: “There was a *peeping Pertness* in his Eye, which would have been *Spirit*, had his Heart been warm’d with Humanity, or his Brain stored with *Ideas*”.⁸¹ Cibber in this instance is presented as lacking all internal qualities, he becomes all surface, suggesting that he is not acting when he portrays a fop, but is in fact one and the same. In the words of the author of the article Cibber is:

⁷⁹ Anon, ‘The Case of the Patentees and Players of Drury-Lane’, *The Gentleman’s Magazine: Or, Monthly Intelligencer*, June 1733, 3, 30 edition, 299.

⁸⁰ Anon, ‘The Case of the Patentees and Players of Drury-Lane’, 300.

⁸¹ Anon, ‘Mr OUTIS Answered, and Mr CIBBER Characterized.’, *The Gentleman’s Magazine: Or, Monthly Intelligencer*, November 1734, 4, 46 edition, 611.

beautifully *absorb'd* by the Character; and *demanded*, and *monopolized*, Attention: His very Extravagancies were coloured with *Propriety*; and Affectation sat so easy about him, that it was in danger of appearing *Amiable*.⁸²

For this author, the actor and character become indistinguishable. Cibber is represented as using extravagancies and luxury to present himself as polite and genteel. His performance and “Affectation”, the author suggests, verges on success as Cibber risks being erroneously identified as “Amiable”. Nevertheless, the author is clear that it is “Affectation” and therefore Cibber is not to be mistaken for a ‘real’ gentleman.

The charges made against Cibber’s intellect was intimately tied up with issues of status. By attacking Cibber’s claim to intellect, critics attempted to expose Cibber as an individual who was not entitled to the designation of a gentleman. The dubious status of the actor, neither a man of high social standing, nor a man of property or industry, represented a challenge to traditional concepts of gentility. Dawson reveals that the concern of the actor’s status was rooted in his ability to represent a gentility which he did not inherently possess:

the issue was not so much a matter of class as one of status and the extent to which the low-born player could mirror the superior personage of the born gentleman or - woman and thereby throw the notion of a successive, inherent social dominance into doubt.⁸³

The actor’s capability at portraying gentility made him dangerous as he was able to confuse the idea of distinct outward indicators of status which are inscribed on the body and can be easily read and interpreted. In other words, “If players could appear ‘well-born’, how did one know whether the ‘well-born’ were playing at an identity not innately theirs”.⁸⁴ The notion of imitation was further complicated by a number of actors, including Cibber, who had managed to achieve the wealth necessary to present themselves as polite gentlemen off-stage, wearing the fashions of genteel men and gaining access to polite social spaces.⁸⁵ The ability of actors

⁸² Anon, 'Mr OUTIS Answered', 611.

⁸³ Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre*, 218.

⁸⁴ Dawson, *Gentility and the Comic Theatre*, 182.

⁸⁵ For more on Cibber’s rise in society see: Koon, *Colley Cibber*.

to successfully cross over into the genteel world off-stage, therefore, raised concerns similar to those expressed with the fop. The fop, therefore, provided a medium through which contemporaries could scrutinize Cibber as an individual who challenged the readability of gentility, by using intellect as a means of distinguishing between the gentleman and the imposter.

It is not only in his empty head, however, that critics used as evidence of Cibber's lower and impolite status. Periodicalists of the period noted Cibber's inability to portray heroic characters due to his appearance. Cibber's small stature, coupled with his high and squeaky voice, is used as evidence by *The Gentleman's Magazine* (November, 1734) that he was "physically better adapted to the fop than the hero".⁸⁶ Contemporaries used his body as evidence of his suitability for comic portrayals:

Mr *Quin* is *sometimes* wrong in his Tragick Characters; Mr *Cibber* is *always* so. [...] Why, Nature herself *limits Parts* to a Player, by the Voice, the Figure, and Conception, which the Managers should observe. In every one of these she meant Mr *Cibber* for a *Comedian*; for if we look at him as Sir *Courtly*, or Lord *Foppington*, we must confess he was *born* to be *laugh'd at*.⁸⁷

Cibber's body marks him out as a figure to be laughed at: this not only makes him suitable to portray fops, but it also goes some way to explaining his portrayal as a fop. "Nature" has designated Cibber a fop, according to the author. Cibber's physical inferiority predetermines him as one to be "laugh'd at" as his "Figure" is not one suitable for a heroic or genteel character. Possessing a body suitable only for comic roles, Cibber is revealed to be a secondary rather than a leading man of the stage, and as such an inferior man.

⁸⁶ Kristina Straub, 'Actors and Homophobia', in *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theater*, ed. J. Douglas Canfield and Deborah Payne Fisk (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 269.

⁸⁷ Anon, 'Mr OUTIS Answered', 610.

Cibber accepted that his physical stature rendered him unsuited to act certain roles. In his autobiography-of-sorts, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber* (1740), Cibber gives a frank account of his bodily defects:

The first Thing that enters into the Head of a young Actor is that of being a Heroe: In this Ambition I was soon snubb'd, by the Insufficiency of my Voice; to which might be added, an uniform'd meagre Person (tho' then not ill made) with a dismal pale Complexion.⁸⁸

Acknowledging that his form made him unsuitable for the heroic roles he craved, Cibber early in his career realized his suitability for comic parts, or more specifically foppish roles. Indeed, Cibber exploited the perception of himself as suited to portraying fops to help enhance his career. He wrote a number of fop characters, including the role of Sir Novelty Fashion, explicitly with his own body and abilities in mind.

Furthermore, Cibber was able to use the perception of himself as a fop to defend himself from certain criticisms he faced as a successful actor. It was not just on stage that Cibber subscribed to the courtly model of gentility: it has been largely accepted by historians and literary critics that Cibber also utilized the foppish characteristics as part of his public persona. As Julia Fawcett explains: “[t]he fawning fop marked Cibber’s celebrity persona and made his career [...] As his fame in the part grew, Cibber began to incorporate the fop’s elaborate dress and flowery language into his everyday performances of self”.⁸⁹ By adopting the “aristocratic masculinities” of the fop, Cibber exposed himself to criticism as both an imposter and a figure of excessive consumption.⁹⁰ McGirr has posited that Cibber’s conscious adoption of the “Foppington mask” as part of his public persona was a conscious decision “to disarm those worried about the actor-manager-playwright’s social mobility and cultural

⁸⁸ Colley Cibber, *A Critical Edition of An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*, ed. John Maurice Evans (New York: Garland Publishers, 1987), 106.

⁸⁹ Julia H. Fawcett, ‘The Growth of Celebrity Culture: Colley Cibber, Charlotte Charke, and the Overexpression of Gender’, in *Spectacular Disappearances: Celebrity and Privacy, 1696-1801* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 68.

⁹⁰ McGirr, *Partial Histories*, 26.

authority”.⁹¹ Vanity and foolishness were better vices than greed or ambition: Cibber’s adoption of the vain fop persona allowed him to engage with luxury in order to present a model of gentility befitting his wealth and position within society, while also providing some protection from more criticism than he was already, due to his success, bound to attract.

However, while Cibber accepted that his appearance was unexceptional and, in some ways, sub-par, and deployed a performance of foppish excess in his self-presentation, he contested his critics’ representation of him as intellectually inferior and of a lowly status. Cibber engaged extensively with the discourse surrounding intellect and understandings of gentility in relation to his portrayal as a fop. In his *Apology* he drew constantly on the notion of intelligence both as evidence of his foppishness as well as to undermine charges of foppishness made against him. Commenting on his choice to write a partial history of his life Cibber states:

my Enemies will then read me with Pleasure, and you, perhaps, with Envy, when you find that Follies, without the Reproach of Guilt upon them, are not inconsistent with Happiness. ----- But why make my Follies publik? Why not? I have pass’d my Time very pleasantly with them, and I don’t recollect that they have ever been hurtful to any other Man living. Even admitting they were injudiciously chosen, would it not be Vanity in me to take Shame to myself for not being found a Wise Man? Really, Sir, my Appetites were in too much haste to be happy, to throw away my Time in pursuit of a Name I was sure I could never arrive at.⁹²

Cibber embraces his foppish follies, dismissing any claim to genius by indicating his main concern was happiness. However, despite opening his *Apology* by dismissing any claim to intellect, Cibber inverts his self-presentation as foppish, suggesting that by acknowledging his foppishness he in fact reveals his judgement:

of all the Assurances I was ever guilty of, this, of writing my own Life, is the most hardy. I beg his Pardon! --- Impudent is what I shou’d have said! That thro’ every Page there runs a Vein of Vanity and Impertinence, which no *French Ensigns memoires* ever came up to; but, as this is a common Error, I presume the Terms of *Doating Trifler, Old Fool, or Conceited Coxcomb*, will carry Contempt enough for an

⁹¹ McGirr, *Partial Histories*, 26.

⁹² Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 2.

impartial Censor to Bestow on me; that my Style is unequal, pert, and frothy, patch'd and party-colour'd like the Coat of an *Harlequin*; low and pompous, cramm'd with Epithets, stew'd with Scraps of second-hand *Latin* from common Quotations; frequently aiming at Wit, without ever hitting the Mark; a mere Ragoust, toss'd up from the Offals of other Authors: My Subject below all Pens but my own, which, whenever I keep to, is flatly dawb'd by one eternal Egotism: That I want nothing but Wit, to be as an accomplish'd a Coxcomb here, as ever I attempted to expose on the Theatre: Nay, that this very Confession is no more a sign of my Modesty, than it is a Proof of my Judgement⁹³

In this passage Cibber embraces his own faults as an author. In admitting his authorial flaws, Cibber not only takes the sting out of any future criticism of his *Apology* (of which there would be many) but exploits the reader's association of him with the fops he famously played on stage. Aligning himself with foppish characteristics Cibber uses his perceived flaws to promote his work by making it appear exciting and interesting. And yet, he simultaneously undermines the perception of himself as foppish; he suggests that his acknowledgment of his folly and vanity proves he possesses a self-awareness that precludes him from charges of a low intellect.

Similarly, Cibber used the *Apology* to directly oppose the claims made about his low status. Within the text, Cibber offers an account of his descendance from genteel stock through his mother's side. Furthermore, he attempts to challenge the broader notion that gentleman cannot, and should not, perform on stage:

I am convinc'd, were it possible to take off that Disgrace and Prejudice, which Custom has thrown upon the Profession of an Actor, many a well-born younger Brother, and Beauty of low Fortune would gladly have adorn'd the Theatre, who by their not being able to brook such Dishonour to their Birth, have pass'd away their Lives decently unheeded and forgotten.⁹⁴

Echoing the author of *The Case of the Patentees and Players of Drury-Lane*, Cibber indicates that members of the gentry would be well suited to the stage, if only the "Disgrace and Prejudice" attached to it could be removed. However, despite their agreement in this instance,

⁹³ Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 26–27.

⁹⁴ Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 46.

Cibber, unlike the author of the article, does not attribute this “Disgrace” to the current actors but to society’s inherited prejudices. In doing so, Cibber engages with broader debates about gentility to reinforce his own perception of himself as of genteel stock.

Prior to Pope’s crowning of Cibber as the King of Dunces under the name of Bays, Cibber himself acknowledged the connection between himself and the character in a comic poem originally published under the name Francis Fairplay. Within the poem Cibber reveals his affinity to the fop he played as they share intellectual failings:⁹⁵

*When Bays thou play’st, Thyself thou art;
For that by Nature fit,
No Blockhead better suits the Part,
Than such a Coxcomb Wit.*

*In Wronghead too, thy Brains we see,
Who might do well at Plough;
As fit for Parliament was he,
As for the Laurel, Thou.*⁹⁶

Once again Cibber embraces the label of fop, recognizing his suitability for the role of Bays (a failed playwright), and suggesting that his lack of “Brains” make him unsuitable for the Laureate position he holds. Succeeding his revelation in the *Apology* of his authorship of these lines, Cibber continues to acknowledge his assessment of his own weakness as a poet, stating: “After this Consciousness of my real Defects, you will easily judge, Sir, how little I presume that my Poetical Labours may outlive those of my mortal *Contemporaries*”.⁹⁷ Cibber exhibits an awareness of his limitations as an author that is often overlooked by critics who prefer to emphasize his vanity. His acknowledgement of his failings is a conscious choice, one intended to not only undercut the criticism of his contemporaries, but to also show

⁹⁵ Cibber wrote the less-than-complementary poem in response to accusations he had anonymously published a poem in praise of himself in the *Whitehall Evening Post*. He admits his authorship in Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 30.

⁹⁶ Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 30, stanza IV-V.

⁹⁷ Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 32.

himself as someone who is capable of critically assessing his own work and therefore expose the inaccuracy of his depiction as vain and conceited.

After the publication of *The Dunciad*, Cibber issued a public response in the form of a published letter titled *Another Occasional Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope* (1744). In the letter Cibber explicitly addresses Pope's criticism of his supposed social climbing and claims to gentlemanly status, as well as Pope's designation of him as the King of Dunces. Cibber indicates that he is more than prepared to defend himself: "I am now, you see, once more willing to bring Matters to an Issue, or (as the Boxers say) to answer your Challenge, and come to a Trial of Manhood with you".⁹⁸ Within the letter Cibber further defends himself against charges of low intellect, stating that "to act a Coxcomb well, requires a Justness of Imagination, which Dunces will never arrive at".⁹⁹ Cibber inverts the language deployed by Pope to reveal his own understanding of his relationship to the fop characters he portrayed. Kristina Straub supports Cibber's suggestion that his portrayal of fops is linked to his acting ability and a sense of intellectual understanding, she indicates that Cibber's excess in part reveals his control over his performance and character portrayal:

He abjectly puts on the compromised masculinity attributed to him and other actors – but with a difference. When Cibber makes a spectacle of himself, as he frequently does, he retains a self-consciousness that becomes a central part of the show. The actor, Cibber shows us, is not a helpless object but a professional exhibitionist who watches even as he displays himself.¹⁰⁰

Cibber's self-conscious performance, both on and off stage, distinguishes him as an actor.

Although his performance exudes excess, it is done so consciously, with every movement and gesture measured to add to the character. Cibber's curation of a foppish persona is careful and astute. He perpetuates the association between himself and the fops he plays, but only in relation to vanity and fashionable excess, rejecting any suggestion that his reputation as a fop

⁹⁸ Colley Cibber, *Another Occasional Letter From Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope*. (Glasgow, 1744), 7.

⁹⁹ Cibber, *Another Occasional Letter*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 40.

was a reflection on his intellect or genteel status. However, by accepting, and in some instances perpetuating the conflation of his public persona with the fops he portrayed on stage, Cibber enabled and facilitated the use of the fop as a means to contest his identity. Accordingly, despite his protestations and evidence to the contrary, Cibber, to all intents and purposes, has been remembered by history as a fop: a social climber who used luxury to insert himself into genteel circles and make claims to a genteel identity he did not possess.

Conclusion

The shift from presenting the fop's social extravagance to explaining his behaviour in terms of physical and intellectual inadequacies represents a transition in the treatment of the fop. It signalled a recognition of the fop's dangerous potential as an example of masculinity and gentility on the stage and a need to move beyond ridicule to challenge the fop's existence more directly. The frequently satirical form of the periodical essay, along with its target of a polite genteel readership, and social agenda meant the fop was a staple figure within its pages. The shift in form in part facilitated the heightened criticism of the foppish figure, as the two-dimensional fops of periodicals lost the comic function that ultimately made the Restoration stage fops harmless and likeable. Nevertheless, the function of the fop as a medium for the discussion of prevalent concerns in society remained. What this chapter has exposed, however, is that the types of concerns the fop is used to address undergo a shift as we move into the early decades of the eighteenth century, with a heightened emphasis on understandings of gentility, and the impact of luxury consumption on the formation of genteel identity. As a figure popularized on the Restoration stage, a figure who for many would be easily recognizable, the fop was a vehicle through which periodicalists could discuss issues of luxury, intellect, and identity. A mutable figure, the fop stood in as the negative standard

against which gentility could be defined: fops allowed periodicalists to offer their readers an example of what not to be or do, without having to give too much detail on what they should be/do.

The shift from a court model of gentility to politeness fostered a change in the fop's presentation. The mutability of the fop allowed for periodicalists to at once maintain the association of the fop with the court, but also to attach the label to social climbers who sought to present themselves, through luxury consumption, in a manner above their station. This was possible due to the grounding of the fop in excess. The new commercialized conditions, which opened up luxury to a wider section of society meant the fop, although still a figure of courtly excess, could also be used to signify the excess of the expanding "middling sort". The persistence of excess in the presentation and understanding of the fop allowed for the continuation of the figure's significance as a tool for social commentary. In particular, this chapter has shown how the fop's excess came to be figured as an internal failure, one which stemmed from a lack of intellect and understanding. As the "middling sorts" grew, periodicalists became increasingly concerned over the impact of luxury consumption as an expression of status. By prioritizing internal characteristics, such as morality, behaviour, and intellect, periodicalists were able to challenge the assumption that superfluous luxury consumption always signified gentility and status. Instead, advocates of politeness such as Addison and Steele, used the fop to teach the "middling sorts" not only the correct way of engaging with luxury, but also how to identify those who are unsuccessful in their attempts to cultivate politeness. By locating gentility within the body, and particularly in the mind, rather than expressing it through outward displays of consumption, periodicalists reinforced the notion of indisputable hierarchies within society, while simultaneously challenging those hierarchies and classifications of gentility.

An accessible and popular mode of print, the periodical press focused upon the figure of the fop to express concerns about fashion, luxury, and trade. The fop became a key component in presentations of the more dubious consequences of society's engagement with luxury. Despite the divergent presentations of the origin of the fop's lack of intellect, that is to say whether it was a result of predetermined deformity, or instead a result of an excessive consumption of luxuries, what is clear in all references to the fop's brain is that in his engagement with luxury he is proven a fool. The presentation of the fop as "empty-headed" supported the notion of the enervating effects of new luxury, revealing the potential of luxury to alter the intellectual understanding and capability of an individual. Moreover, the fop acted as an example of the incorrect manner of engaging with luxury: the character was an apt tool for social critics such as Addison and Steele, who could use the associations of the fop to provide guidance on the best way to engage with commerce. While engagement with luxury was encouraged, periodicalists set a precedent by using the example of the fop's "empty head" to warn society of the pitfalls inherent when one participates in commerce.

In the attacks levied against Cibber, alongside his own self presentation, we see how discourses on literary fops could shape responses to real people. Cibber evokes and embraces the Restoration associations of the fop with performance and comedy in his self-portrayal in order to successfully sell himself and his works. Nevertheless, he consistently defends himself against charges of a lack of intellect and in doing so attempts to dissociate the newer connotations of the fop from his self-portrayal. This, however, did not stop his critics from turning to the foppish characteristics of excess, failed politeness, and lack of intellect, to undermine Cibber's claims to gentility and status. Contemporary attempts to portray Cibber as a fop, reveal the usefulness of the fop as a means of policing gentility. In the example of Cibber, the transition from the comedic and performative function of the fop, to the fop as illustrative of failed gentility and politeness is brought to the fore.

Chapter Four

The Macaroni and the Sexualization of Foppish Characteristics

In the January 1773 issue of *The Macaroni and Theatrical Magazine, or Monthly Register*, an article titled ‘The Dissection of a Macaroni’ was published. Essentially a reprint of the article *The Dissection of a Beau’s Brain* published over sixty years earlier in *The Spectator No.275*, ‘The Dissection of a Macaroni’ offers an examination of “the interior parts of one of those creatures”.¹ This anatomical dissection of the Macaroni’s brain draws directly from *The Spectator No.275*, which is discussed at length in Chapter One and Chapter Three, with whole sentences lifted from the earlier piece. Significantly, however, the Beau of the earlier work has been replaced by the Macaroni. Emerging in the 1760s, the macaroni represented the same characteristics traditionally associated with the fop. Francis Grose’s contemporaneous dictionary *Grose’s Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785) signifies the apparent interchangeability between fop and macaroni, defining the latter as:

An Italian paste made of flour and eggs; also, a fop; which name arose from a club, called the Maccaroni [sic] Club, instituted by some of the most dressy travelled gentlemen about town, who led the fashions; whence a man foppishly dressed was supposed a member of that club, and by contradiction, stiled [sic] a Maccaroni.²

Much like Grose, modern scholars have tended to conflate the macaroni and fop. Elaine McGirr suggests that the macaroni embodied “a kind of foppery in which men lately returned from the Grand Tour displayed their foreign tastes and affectations”.³ Recognizing the ways in which the fop informed the creation of the macaroni, Peter McNeil refers to the figure as a “species of foppish man”, a specific iteration of the fop which resonated particularly with the

¹ Anon, ‘The Dissection of a Macaroni’, *The Macaroni and Theatrical Magazine, or Monthly Register*, January 1773, 161, James Smith Noel Collection, Louisiana State University, Shreveport; Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 571.

² Francis Grose, *Grose’s Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, ed. Pierce Egan (London: for the Editor, 1823 [1785]).

³ Elaine McGirr, *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 138.

debates surrounding foreign travel both during, and in the wake of, the peace deal that concluded the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).⁴ Taking this association further, McNeil goes on to suggest that the macaroni's "treacherous Francophilia [...] worked within an older, fairly continuous lineage and circulation of ideas and genres".⁵ A segment in the *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal*, titled 'The Macaroni: a Satire' (April 1773), records this progression of foppish identities, stating: "'Every age has its fops. About twenty years ago we had a gentle race of *Fribbles*. These were soon frightened away by the bolder *Bucks*, and the swaggering *Bloods*; but now we are got to fribbling again in the finicking form known by the name of *Macaroni*".⁶ The author of the satire overtly aligns the Macaroni with the earlier iterations of the fop such as the Fribble, recognizing a trajectory of developing character types.

Unlike the beau or the fribble that came before, which, while synonymous with the fop, never fully subsumed the term, the macaroni is a distinct entity that shares foppish features but has another facet. I argue, therefore, that while all macaronis are fops, not all fops are macaronis. Macaroni becomes the dominant nomenclature used in the latter decades of the eighteenth century to refer to foppish identities, almost to the complete exclusion of the term fop from popular discourse. The appropriation of macaroni at this moment can, I suggest, be linked to the altered connotations of effeminacy. Effeminacy had previously been divorced from issues of sexual identity, but from the mid-century, as Karen Harvey asserts, sexuality came to be tied up with effeminacy: "[o]ver time, the fop merged with other male characters – the molly and the queen – for whom effeminacy was a marker of their desire for

⁴ Peter McNeil, *Pretty Gentlemen: Macaroni Men and the Eighteenth-Century Fashion World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), 13.

⁵ McNeil, *Pretty Gentlemen: Macaroni Men and the Eighteenth-Century Fashion World*, 145.

⁶ 'The Macaroni: A Satire', *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal*, April 1773, 319.

other men, finally becoming the (modern) exclusive male sodomite”.⁷ Philip Carter suggests that while the Restoration fop’s effeminacy could be “explained in terms of social, not sexual, inadequacies and misdemeanours”, later iterations of the figure would come to be defined in sexualized terms.⁸ It is the macaroni, I ascertain, that embodies this shift. By exploring the alteration in the term effeminacy, this chapter addresses how and why the macaroni became a sexualized figure, in a way that the fop up until this point had not. The macaroni, I argue, came to represent masculine inadequacy, an inadequacy that was expressed in terms of sexual failure through the deployment of a rhetoric of disease, impotence, cowardice, effeminacy, and genderlessness.

What makes the macaroni unique is the ways in which traditionally foppish characteristics take on new meanings when present in the macaroni. The Grand Tour in part facilitated the shift towards the sexualization of the fop, as critics deployed the macaroni to link excessive foreign consumption with excessive sexual indulgence. I will focus on the means by which disease was used to represent and critique the fop’s newly sexualized construction, using disease as a framework to understand the appearance of the macaroni as an effeminate individual who was represented as exhibiting signs of sexual activity in the form of syphilis. Following this, the chapter will turn to a consideration of the ways in which disease was framed as a matter of national and military concern. Drawing on the relationship between Stuart identity and foppishness discussed in Chapter Two, I will explore how the continued threat posed by Jacobitism fed into the portrayal of foppish identities such as the macaroni in the latter half of the century. I will draw heavily from caricature as a medium which was particularly ripe in this period and intimately tied up with the macaroni

⁷ Karen Harvey, ‘The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800’, *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005), 300.

⁸ Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow and New York: Pearson Education, 2001)139.

phenomenon. In particular, the final section of the chapter will address the depiction of macaroni's actively seeking sexual relationships of different kinds and explores the ways in which the macaroni's attempts to engage in sexual activity was met with repulsion and violence.

Recent scholarship on gender theory has identified the mid-century as a key moment in the progression of the term effeminacy. Declan Kavanagh for instance notes that it was after the outbreak of the Seven Years' War when "discourses of masculinity and effeminacy in Britain began to change swiftly and decisively".⁹ Scholars that have identified the shift of effeminacy from a term denoting not only feminine qualities, but an enjoyment of female company, to a term which possessed a sexual inflection, have tended to focus on the sexualization of effeminacy in relation to homosexuality, especially as it appertains to the macaroni. "It has long been argued that such figures — known as fops, beaux, and dandies, among other terms — were mocked because of a hostility to effeminacy" suggests Dominic Janes, who goes on to note that while "this no doubt has some truth to it, one particular term newly coined in the 1760s, 'macaroni', also became associated with sodomy".¹⁰ For Janes, while the early fop was effeminate, the figure was not homosexual; this however changes with the advent of the macaroni. Similarly, Sally O'Driscoll indicates that the macaroni and fop are "almost indistinguishable" yet identifies that "fops are not necessarily assumed to be sodomites", while macaronis are.¹¹ For Janes and O'Driscoll, what distinguishes the macaroni from the fop then is the macaroni's association with sodomy. I, however, assert that it is not

⁹ Declan Kavanagh, *Effeminate Years: Literature, Politics, and Aesthetics in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Maryland and London: Bucknell University Press; The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2017), xii.

¹⁰ Dominic Janes, 'A Queer Taste for Macaroni', *The Public Domain Review*, 22 February 2017.

¹¹ Sally O'Driscoll, 'The Molly and the Fop: Untangling Effeminacy in the Eighteenth Century', in *Developments in the Histories of Sexualities: In Search of the Normal, 1600-1800*, ed. Chris Mounsey (Maryland; Plymouth: Bucknell University Press; The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2013), 146-47.

sodomy which differentiates between these figures, but rather their identification as individuals who actively pursue sexual relations with limited success.

The macaroni is not exclusively identified as a sodomite, as the examples in this chapter will show. Instead, the macaroni is presented within a sexual framework which reflects the altered associations of effeminacy in a variety of ways. As Emma Clery's definition indicates, the term effeminacy "is employed as the sum of a complex of derogatory ideas also gendered 'feminine', including corruption, weakness, cowardice, luxury, immorality and the unbridled play of passions. The 'effeminate' man is not by definition homosexual but may be hyper-sexual".¹² That is to say, the macaroni is not representative of a specific sexual identity, but rather demonstrates a range of sexual characteristics. Viewed this way, the macaroni comes to represent a sexualized version of the fop, who embodies the altered association of effeminacy in the latter half of the century.

The Macaroni Club

In his treatise *On National Characters* (1748) David Hume argues that identity was formed through conversation, interaction, and exposure:

The human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manner, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues. The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other's sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were, by contagion, through the whole club or knot of companions.¹³

¹² E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature, Commerce and Luxury* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 10.

¹³ David Hume, 'Of National Characters', in *David Hume Selected Essays*, ed. Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 115.

For Hume, character is formed by shared experience. This concept was influential to debates surrounding the Grand Tour as a process which inspired effeminacy in the nation's young impressionable men. In particular, Hume's interpretation of homosocial experience emphasizes the idea of a "club". Shared experiences, like those cultivated on the Grand Tour, facilitate the formation of group identities which can become formalized in "clubs". Hume, however, articulates concerns surrounding the potential of these "clubs" to act as bastions of "vice".

Using Hume's assessment that exposure promoted imitation, critics were able to frame the homosocial nature of the Grand Tour as a corrupting influence which encouraged vice. John Brown's polemic against the current state of society, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Time* (1757-1758), put Hume's philosophical ideas to the test by applying them specifically to the Grand Tour. Drawing together concerns over education and effeminacy, Brown argued that the Grand Tour encouraged vice and weakened the national constitution:¹⁴

we may affirm, with Truth, that no Circumstance in Education can more surely tend to strengthen Effeminacy and Ignorance, than the present premature, and indigested *Travel*. For, as the uninstructed Youth must needs meet with a Variety of Example, good and bad, vile and praiseworthy, as his Manners are childish, and his Judgment crude, he will naturally imbibe what is most consentaneous with his puerile Habits. Thus, while Wisdom and Virtue can find no Place in him, every Foreign Folly, Effeminacy, or Vice, meeting with a correspondent Soil, at once takes Root and flourishes.¹⁵

For Brown, effeminacy is rooted in the foreign and came to be expressed primarily through dress, which Brown identifies as the "first and capital Article of Town-Effeminacy".¹⁶

Although Brown does not explicitly reference sexual identity and sexual activity as a concern

¹⁴ John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*. By Dr. Brown, Author of the *Essays on Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics, &c.*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Printed for G. Faulkner, J. Hoey, sen. and jun. and J. Exshaw, Booksellers, 1758). Brown's satirical work proved highly successful, originally published in two volumes between 1757 and 1758, it went through seven editions in one year.

¹⁵ Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 1:vol 1, 23-24.

¹⁶ Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 1:vol 1, 24.

related to effeminacy, his deployment of language surrounding vice is suggestive of such a link. Furthermore, in connecting effeminacy with the Grand Tour in the way he does, Brown shifts the culpability of vice away from the nation and securely positions effeminacy as a trait developed by young men while abroad. The macaroni's sexualized brand of effeminacy therefore could easily be tied to the Grand Tour by its critics. As Conrad Brunstrom explains, "effeminacy and/or homosexuality" in the mid-eighteenth century was "figured as an imported rather than an indigenous crisis".¹⁷ Reflecting on the contemporary opinions of the time Brunstrom suggests there was a belief that if "[m]en would have stayed men and the sexes would have remained admirably demarcated had Britons been content to restrain their tastes to the domestic".¹⁸ In going abroad, socializing with foreign nations, and adopting foreign manners, macaronis represented a danger to the domestic by importing effeminacy upon their return to Britain. As Chloe Chard elucidates, the utility of the Grand Tour was often "mapped out in gendered terms [...] as a choice between the solid advantages of manly liberty and the superficial charms of effeminate luxury", with Britain framed as manly, and Europe representative of effeminacy.¹⁹

The effeminate proclivities Brown identifies as formed on the Grand Tour came to be embodied in the macaroni, who continued to exhibit unconstrained foreign manners, morals, and sexual practice on their return from Europe. The Macaroni Club was a late eighteenth-century phenomenon; a club whose members were perceived as establishing foreign practices on home soil. First referenced by Horace Walpole in a letter to the Earl of Hertford dated 6th February 1764, the club was, according to Walpole, "composed of all the travelled young

¹⁷ Conrad Brunstrom, "'Be Male and Female Still': An ABC of Hyperbolic Masculinity in the Eighteenth Century", in *Presenting Gender: Changing Sex in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Chris Mounsey (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2001), 39.

¹⁸ Brunstrom, 'Be Male and Female Still', 39.

¹⁹ Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 47.

men who wear long curls and spying-glasses”.²⁰ It was a club where those “young men who had travelled in Europe and extravagantly imitated Continental tastes and fashions” could meet and indulge their taste for all things foreign.²¹ The homosocial nature of the Grand Tour facilitated not only the effeminization of the individual, but enabled the formalization and continued perpetuation of this effeminacy through clubs. A supportive collective of effeminate men, macaronis were able to endorse and aide the perpetuation of effeminacy through the club mentality that Hume warns is so dangerous.

Yet while contemporaries such as Brown highlighted the dangers foreign travel posed to British masculine identity, the Grand Tour was still considered an “important, if not essential, part of a gentleman’s education”, which consisted of travelling to the main cities of Europe, most notably those of France and Italy.²² For many genteel eighteenth-century families, the Grand Tour was perceived as a necessary step in the education of their male children – a process which not only showed them the world but polished and refined their manners. The significance of the Grand Tour can be gauged by the numerous published travel accounts such as Tobias Smollett’s, *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766) and the letters of Joseph Spence, or texts like Richard Hurd’s *Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel* (1764) which offered practical guidance on everything from etiquette to financial concerns for those about to embark on their travels. As well as these longer accounts, the Grand Tour was also a popular topic within other genres including periodicals, magazines, plays and novels.

The complexities of the relationship between the Grand Tour and its perceived promotion of effeminacy were most successfully articulated in caricatures, with clothing

²⁰ Horace Walpole, *The Letters of Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Oxford. Volume 5.*, ed. Helen Toynbee, The Eighteenth Century. Electronic Edition. (Charlottesville, VA: InterLex Corp, 2002), 450.

²¹ ‘Macaroni, n.’, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 18 December 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/111762>.

²² Christopher Hibbert, *The Grand Tour* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s and Sons, 1969), 10.

becoming a lens through which the macaroni's sexual identity was exposed. Originally an import from the Grand Tour, which became popularized in England in the 1770s, caricatures offered a visual medium for the exploration of character. Depending on what Mike Goode terms "repetition and dialogue across prints", caricatures took recognizable literary character traits and transformed them into pictorial representations of characters.²³ As Diana Donald explains, "[h]yperbole might be absurd, but it allowed caricature to convey impressions which would have been impossible in the printed word".²⁴ The artistic license permitted within caricature allowed for the exaggeration of the material extravagance of figures like the fop to be captured and ridiculed in new ways. Indeed, this new form was integral to the popularization of the term macaroni, and the figures association with a sexual identity.

The caricature *What is this my Son Tom?* (1774, Figure 4.1) creates a stark visual contrast by positioning a young man, newly returned from abroad, who's body has become overrun by fashion, beside his father, a plainly dressed yeoman. Tom's exaggerated and phallic wig, which enables him to tower over his father, acts as a signifier of his effeminacy. Amelia Rauser explains that: "[m]acaroni wigs, because they were so extreme in their size and extravagance, seemed to subvert the traditional meaning of the masculine wig. Instead of sober public virtue, the macaroni wig represented something grotesque, decadent, and effeminate".²⁵ The excessive size of the phallic wig draws attention to the macaroni as a sexualized individual, yet the size also reveals the macaroni's sexual identity to be something which is unregulated and therefore repulsive. Furthermore, Tom's preference for the shortened coat, signifies what McNeil terms his "sodomitical taste", the insinuation being that

²³ Mike Goode, 'The Public and the Limits of Persuasion in the Age of Caricature', in *The Efflorescence of Caricature, 1759-1838*, ed. Todd Porterfield (London: Routledge, 2011), 120.

²⁴ Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1996), 168.

²⁵ Amelia Rauser, 'Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 103.



Figure 4.1

What is this my Son Tom? 1774. Published by Sayer & Bennett. Mezzotint with some etching, 350 x 250 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires 4536.

the short coat in fashion amongst macaronis exposed more of the posterior and therefore suggested homosexuality.²⁶ The symbolism of the wig and coat is further emphasized through the father's comparatively plain and practical style, with his natural looking hair, and long coat which reaches down to his calves. While Rauser warns us against reading the father figure in this print in wholly positive terms, reminding us that "[b]alance, or the avoidance of extremes, was considered key to true gentility", his "too-rough rusticity" is not exaggerated to the same extent as his son's over refinement.²⁷ That said, the print makes clear that the father's rusticity is to be preferred to his son's effeminate excess. This is emphasized through the shock of the father at the sight of his son. While the son appears to be unfazed by the appearance of his father, the father's reaction emphasizes the extreme nature of the macaroni's dress. This caricature, and others like it, reveal how articles of dress were used by contemporaries to represent and challenge the macaroni's sexual identity.

It was not just the male macaroni, however, whose fashionable excess was ridiculed in print. Caricatures provide a unique insight into the representation of foppishness, particularly the gendered application of foppish characteristics as discussed in the first chapter. Samuel Hieronymus and Carington Bowles' caricature *Be not amaz'd Dear Mother – It is indeed your Daughter Anne* (1774, Figure 4.2), parallels the print *What is this my son Tom?* in its caricature of fashionable excess. Both prints engage with the issue of foppish fashionability and, paired together, reveal that characteristics satirized as foppish transcended gender boundaries. Anne stands in the foreground of *Be not amaz'd Dear Mother – It is indeed your Daughter Anne*; much like Tom, her excessive wig dominates the image. On top

²⁶ Peter McNeil, "'That Doubtful Gender': Macaroni Dress and Male Sexualities", *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 4 (1999): 421.

²⁷ Rauser, 'Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni', 104.



Figure 4.2

Be not amaz'd Dear Mother – It is indeed your Daughter Anne. 1774. After Samuel Hieronymus Grimm and Published by Carington Bowles. Hand-coloured Mezzotint, 349 x 249 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires 4537.

of the wig is balanced a small hat trimmed with pink ribbon. The fashionable accessories of the wig and nosegay stand out as disproportionate to Anne's small stature – the wig in particular appears to extend to nearly the same length as Anne's body. Positioned on the right-hand side of the print is Anne's mother who looks aghast at the appearance of her daughter. Anne's mother is clearly not representative of a rustic figure: her red dress and black cloak with a fur trim, although plain, appear well-kept and expensive. In effect, Anne provides a female counterpart to Tom of the macaroni prints as they reflect the same concerns. Indeed, Anne became a byword in print for excessive female fashionability, just as Tom came to represent the macaroni. Yet while both are examples of extreme fashionability, Anne in this instance is not sexualized to the same extent as Tom: she may be fashionably ridiculous, but she is not sexually improper in this instance. Nevertheless, other depictions of the female macaroni nominally titled 'Ann' or 'Anne' do sexualize the figure. In one particularly ripe example, similarly titled *Is this my Daughter Ann?* (Figure 4.3), Ann is paired with a male macaroni dressed in military attire. The couple are presented embracing in a doorway: a sign above the door reads Love Joy, hinting towards the sexualized relationship between the two figures. Dressed in the most extravagant manner, the embellishments and frills of the two macaronis' attire contrast the practical dress of the mother figure who stands in horror at the sight of them both. However, in this depiction, the dress of the male and female macaroni is not equal in its excess: the superfluous dress of Ann far outstrips that of the male macaroni, whose wig is trivial when compared with Ann's towering head piece. As mentioned in relation to Tom, the wig had phallic significance in eighteenth-century depictions of men within caricature. Ann's wig, therefore, standing at twice the size of her companions, can be read as suggestive of sexual corruption and digression. As the ultimate sign of fashionable excess, the wig becomes conflated with notions of sexual excess, an idea



Figure 4.3

Is this my Daughter Ann. 1774. After Samuel Hieronymus Grimm and Published by Sarah Sledge. Mezzotint, 344 x 250 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires 4786.

which is reinforced in the print by Ann's surroundings. As a female engaging in promiscuous behaviour, Ann commits a more grievous sin than her male counterpart, and this is expressed through the exaggeration of her clothing.

A Fashionable Disease

The conflation of clothing and fashion with sexual promiscuity was intimately tied up with perceptions of the Grand Tour as a process which promoted sexual exploration and corrupted the behaviour of young British travellers. Sexual activity was a normalized aspect of the Grand Tour. As Kevin Brown elucidates, sexual exploration was perceived as “part of the rite of passage by which a well-connected young man came of age”.²⁸ Indeed, as much is implied by Lord Chesterfield in his letters to his son. Written on November 8, O.S. 1750, Lord Chesterfield writes:

I will, by no means, pay for whores, and their never-failing consequence, surgeons [...] a young fellow must have as little sense as address, to venture, or more properly to sacrifice his health, and ruin his fortune, with such sort of creatures; in such a place as Paris especially.²⁹

Although not endorsing sexual escapades, Lord Chesterfield acknowledges they are common among the young men partaking in the Grand Tour. But more particularly, he indicates that syphilis is the unavoidable consequence of such a liaison. In Samuel Foote's play *The Englishman Return'd From Paris* (1756) Buck's tutor Macruthen is implied to be no more than a pimp: “all your bus'ness was to keep him out of frays; to take care, for the sake of his health, that his wine was genuine and his mistresses as they shou'd be. You pimp'd for him, I

²⁸ Kevin Brown, *The Pox: The Life and Near Death of a Very Social Disease* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2006), 46.

²⁹ Philip Dormer Stanhope, *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, ed. David Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 213.

suppose?”³⁰ Sexual misadventure is presented as an accepted part of the Grand Tour for all young men. The macaroni was deployed by authors to reveal the potentially perilous consequences of that sexual misadventure: conflating travel, fashion, and disease, authors used the macaroni to represent how the contraction of syphilis could impact Britain’s future posterity.

The 1772 print *A Macaroni Dressing Room* (Figure 4.4) conflates fashion with sexual identity by revealing how “fashion” became a tool “used to cover up the ravages of the [syphilis] disease”.³¹ Located in the centre of the print is a macaroni having his wig powdered by a hairdresser and his assistant. The large plumes of powder recalls the lines from *The Macaroni: A Satire*: “[w]hilst round in clouds their powder spreads and flies,/ Enough to blind an honest trave’ller’s eyes”.³² Heavily taxed during the Seven Years war, the powdering of wigs was seen as a sign of fashionable excess and national disloyalty, as the wheat base for the powder was needed to supply food to the military.³³ Therefore not only was the macaroni’s desire to appear fashionable endangering his own body but it also threatened those of the nation by denying the military sustenance. As the macaroni sits, he can be seen applying large beauty patches to his face. The black velvet patches were commonly used as a fashion to cover up the scars caused by syphilis.³⁴ In another print of the same year titled *Modern Refinement or the Two Macaroni’s*, (Figure 4.5) a male macaroni with a large club wig, nosegay, and distorted features makes a bow to a young female macaroni who is sat on a

³⁰ Samuel Foote, *The Englishman Return’d from Paris: Being the Sequel to The Englishman in Paris. A Farce in Two Acts. As It Is Perform’d at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. By Samuel Foote, Esq.* (London: printed for Paul Vaillant, facing Southampton-Street, in the Strand, 1756), 16.

³¹ Brown, *The Pox: The Life and Near Death of a Very Social Disease*, 41.

³² ‘The Macaroni: A Satire’, 12.

³³ Aileen Riberiro, ‘Fashioning Georgian Society’, in *York Georgian Society Lecture* (York, 2019).

³⁴ Patches and powder were used to cover the scarring also known as pockmarks of both syphilis and smallpox. See: Brown, *The Pox: The Life and Near Death of a Very Social Disease*, 41.



Figure 4.5

Modern Refinement or the Two Macaroni's. 1772. Print Made and Published by Francis Edward Adams. Mezzotint, 350 x 248 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires / Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum (undescribed). Registration number: 2010,7081.365.

chair. The female's wig stands tall and is decorated with beads and ribbons. She is sat in profile and on her cheek three beauty patches are clearly visible. Ironically, despite the patches' initial purpose of concealment, they became a popular fashion throughout London society, and offer an interesting example of the reframing of syphilis as fashionable.

The perception of syphilis as a fashionable disease was perpetuated and sustained due to the disease's strong association with France and the Grand Tour. Syphilis received widespread literary attention (both comical and serious) and developed a reputation as "The French disease par excellence".³⁵ Linked explicitly to the French, the disease was represented as an ailment of the rich whose forays abroad were to blame. This in part, is how syphilis came to be conflated with fashionable identity. Not only was the disease associated with travel, but it was framed as a disease of excess. The macaroni's effeminacy as expressed through the figure's excessive consumption as well as the newer connotations of sexual identity, allowed for a rhetoric of infection to be popularized in the figure's representation. Fashion was presented as integral to understandings of "the disease of opulence".³⁶ Authors explicitly linked the consumption of luxury and the penchant for excess with the contraction of the disease, as "Francophile aristocracy" came to "constitute the satirist's primary target".³⁷ The representation of syphilis as so intimately tied up with French fashionability however was double edged. It created space for the representation of syphilis as both an imported and dangerous disease which threatened the English nation, and yet also facilitated an understanding of syphilis as something fashionable, a sign of the infected individual's aristocratic status.

³⁵ 'Ode to the Pox', in *The History of Syphilis* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 98. The poem is provided in translation as part of Claude Quétel's *The History of Syphilis*. The poem was originally taken from *Les petits bougres au manège ou Réponse de M*** en l'an second du rêve de la liberté*, B. N., Imp. Réserve (enfer).

³⁶ 'Ode to the Pox', 98.

³⁷ Noelle Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox: Venereal Disease in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), 17.

The tension between these two disparate understandings of syphilis is captured in John Shebbeare's 1755 novel *Lydia, or Filial Piety*. The novel follows the life of the heroine Lydia, whose establishment into society is constantly subject to setbacks. One particular source of difficulties for the fair young Lydia is the inappropriate advances of Lord Flimsy, a malicious fop who functions in the novel as an exemplar of excessive and aggressive fashionability. He is a graduate of The Grand Tour and is represented as a vile figure whose gambling and sexual escapades have left him morally corrupt and syphilitic. Shebbeare articulates the competing representations of syphilis in a rather comic exchange between Miss Arabella (Lydia's friend and confidant, and the future wife of Lord Flimsy) and Arabella's guardian Mrs Muckworm.

The Viscount being gone, Mrs. *Muckworm* launch'd forth mightily in praise of him; she protested she believed there was not a more noble Lord in all *England*, a more generous, and more handsome Man.

“PARTICULARY about the Nose,” says Miss *Arabella*, “Madam.”

“WHAT signifies a Nose,” says Mrs. *Muckworm*, “a Lord without a Nose surely is to be prefer'd to a Gentleman with; perhaps it may be a Mark of Nobility, to distinguish them from common People.”³⁸

For Arabella, Lord Flimsy's decayed nose caused by numerous bouts of syphilis is scorn worthy, yet Mrs Muckworm considers Lord Flimsy's diseased body as evidence of his nobility. Noelle Gallagher recognizes this trend in representations of syphilis, suggesting that the infection was often presented as “a badge of sexual or social prowess”.³⁹ As a disease associated with excess and luxury, syphilis could be interpreted as a positive signal of not only a man's sexual activity but also his gentility. Yet, according to Brown, syphilis was simultaneously “treated with contempt in high society”, and the flippant reaction to Lord Flimsy's experience of the disease is illustrative of this mentality.⁴⁰ The acceptance of Lord Flimsy's condition by Mrs Muckworm suggests a normalcy to his debauchery, signalling a

³⁸ John Shebbeare, *Lydia, or Filial Piety. A Novel. By the Author of The Marriage-Act, a Novel. And Letters on the English Nation*, vol. 2 (London: Printed for J. Scott, at the Black Swan in Pater-Noster-Row, 1755), 160.

³⁹ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, 16.

⁴⁰ Brown, *The Pox: The Life and Near Death of a Very Social Disease*, 41.

commonality of the condition among young gentlemen, especially those newly returned from the Grand Tour. By focusing on the nose as the symbol of Lord Flimsy's genteel and masculine status, Shebbeare inverts the association of deformed noses as the "hallmark of an inferior being".⁴¹ Instead, Shebbeare reveals how for some a diseased nose was perceived as a sign of genteel fashionability.

The nose became a defining feature of caricatures depicting those who contracted syphilis. Much like Shebbeare's novel, caricatures played on the conflation of gentility and fashion with syphilis. Few depictions included the infamous brass noses that some sufferers used as fashionable accessories to mask their eroded nose. Instead, caricatures often signalled the deformity through either a flat or concaved nose, making the figure represented appear to almost not possess the central facial feature. This is captured in the 1773 print *Lord – or the nosegay macaroni* (Figure 4.6). The macaroni's nose is emphasized through the profile of the figure, whose excessively thin frame is posed and angled to the side. The figure's long polka-dot coat and tight fitted waistcoat draw attention to his thinness, while the large nosegay on his lapel signals his diseased state – the nosegay floral arrangement being a popular fashion used to mask the putrid smell caused by the rotting of the nose. Playing on understandings of fashion as a means of deceit, used to hide an individual's true state (be that class, status, or disease), the viewer is expected to decode the image and look beyond the purely surface appearance of fashionability and deportment to read the underlying signs of corruption and disease, much in the same manner as the reader is expected to challenge Mrs Muckworm's representation of Lord Flimsy's rotting nose as evidence of his gentility.

By pairing Arabella's disgust at Lord Flimsy's nose with Mrs Muckworm's admiration of Lord Flimsy's nose as a symbol of his genteel status, Shebbeare exposes the

⁴¹ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, 163.



Figure 4.6

Lord — or the Nosegay Macaroni. 1773. By Anonymous. Etching, 183 x 103 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires 4825.

complexity of syphilis as a symbol of fashionable and sexual identity. He further explores the perception of syphilis as an accepted symbol of aristocratic manhood in his representation of Lord Flimsy's own flippant attitude towards his diseased state. Lord Flimsy it is revealed, contracted the disease on a number of occasions, and had no qualms with inflicting it on others: "tho' he was sure of contaminating the lovely Body of *Lydia Fairchild* with the most loathsome Disease, and blast her Character with universal Infamy; yet these two Objections weighed nothing in his Opinion".⁴² For Lord Flimsy, fashionability was intimately tied up with his sexual activity. His pursuit of Lydia as a mistress is framed as a pursuit of beauty and novelty: her virginity is treated as an object to be acquired as proof of his fashionable taste. In the end, Lord Flimsy's treatment of sex as an expression of his gentility and fashionability catches up with him and he dies as a result of his disease before he is able to inflict it on his unsuspecting victim. Shebbeare's treatment and discussion of syphilis within the novel emphasizes the idea of the moral culpability of the sexually engaged young gentlemen. Claude Quétel notes that the "tone" of writing on syphilis "became progressively less severe" in the eighteenth century as expressed through a turn to comic treatment of the disease.⁴³ He attributes this shift to rationalism and the consequential movement away from moral concerns. However, although Shebbeare approached syphilis with a light and comic touch, in his narration Shebbeare is also morally didactic and retains a severe tone in relation to Lord Flimsy's actions. The balance between the satirizing of syphilis and the need to present the very real consequences of the disease is captured in the depiction of Lord Flimsy's death:

The Viscount then requiring a skilful Hand to set that Machine right,
which *Peggy* had presented him in the Place of his Gold-watch, was under Operation

⁴² Shebbeare, *Lydia, or Filial Piety. A Novel. By the Author of The Marriage-Act, a Novel. And Letters on the English Nation*, 2: 193.

⁴³ Claude Quétel, *The History of Syphilis*, trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike (Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 75.

on that Account [...] It seems however, that during this Affair, which he had several Times past thro' before, a small Accident happened, a new Symptom, which was no more than a Stoppage of his Lordship's Breath for about six Minutes, after which, forgetting to breathe again, he departed this Life.⁴⁴

Shebbeare's account of Lord Flimsy's death on account of the complications of syphilis is comic. However, his death is also used as evidence of the consequences of Lord Flimsy's excessive pursuits of pleasure.

The moral implications of contracting syphilis, therefore, remained integral to representations of syphilis as a fashionable disease. Contemporaries deployed the rhetoric of disease and infection to explore the impact of fashionable and foreign affectation on the moral character of young British men, with syphilis itself being used as a real example of French infection. As Gallagher explains, authors used

disease to critique the desire to *be* French – to mimic French manners, learn the French language, or imitate French culture – were consistently accompanied by texts attacking the desire to *buy* French – to purchase imported wigs, fabrics, wines, and other luxury goods.⁴⁵

While a specific reflection on the macaroni in relation to this argument falls outside the purview of Gallagher's study, her observations on the connection between "[E]ffeminacy, luxury [and] foppery" as exposed through the association of syphilis with France, reveals the importance of French and British relations to the literary representation of syphilis.⁴⁶ A common argument deployed to defend the necessity of the Grand Tour was the importance of young men learning the polite manners of the French. This idea is articulated by Lord Chesterfield in a letter to his son on November 18, 1748, where he exclaims that "the Graces do not seem to be natives of Great Britain".⁴⁷ However, Brown in *An Estimate of the Manners*

⁴⁴ Shebbeare, *Lydia or Filial Piety. A Novel. By the Author of The Marriage-Act, a Novel. And Letters on the English Nation*, 2: 219.

⁴⁵ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, 125.

⁴⁶ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, 123.

⁴⁷ Stanhope, *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*, 115.

and Principles of the Times challenges this perception of the Grand Tour by evoking France as a natural enemy of Britain. He suggests that the idea of French graces and manners is nothing more than a fallacy developed by the French, who have used this myth to allure “her neighbour Nations, by her own Example, to drink largely of her *circean* and *poisoned Cup* of *Manners*”.⁴⁸ The French he argues, are purposefully corrupting and effeminizing the British nation to ensure their country’s own dominance.

Fashion as an infection threatening the health of young British men is visualized in caricatures. The 1788 print *The Decayed Macaroni. A well known Character!!!* (Figure 4.7) provided the frontispiece for Christopher Anstey’s 1788 poem *Liberality, Or the Decayed Macaroni. A Sentimental Piece*. While the poem uses a first-person narrative to recount the life of a macaroni, the poem is not representative of the single individual but rather operates as representative of all macaroni. The print draws attention to the macaroni as a figure who the public would expect to be diseased and “decayed” in his appearance – the decrepit figure, the print exclaims, is “A well known character”. The print and poem work together to satirize and reveal how the macaroni’s predilections leave the figure in ruin both physically and financially. In the sixth stanza of the poem, the macaroni discloses his habit of gambling as well as his partiality for women:

When I first came to years of discretion,
I took a round sum from the stocks,
Just to keep up a decent succession
Of race—horses, women, and cocks:⁴⁹

The succession of women referenced in this part of the poem is later used to account for his ruin, hinting at the role of sexual activity in corrupting the macaroni. The macaroni reflecting

⁴⁸ Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 1: vol 1, 88.

⁴⁹ Christopher Anstey, *Liberality; or, the Decayed Macaroni. A Sentimental Piece*. (London, 1788), ll. 21–24.



Figure 4.7

The Decayed Macaroni. A well known Character!!! 1788. By Anonymous. Stipple engraving with etching, 22 x 11 cm. Lewis Walpole Library, Orbis Record 8105248.

on his health notes that “‘Tis true, I’m a little decay’d, / My lungs rather husky of late,”.⁵⁰ His ill state is further reflected on in the print: the suggestion that the macaroni is normally a sickly figure is drawn out in the caricature through the macaroni’s hunched and frazzled appearance. As Gallagher points out, “many syphilitic patients who were placed on starvation diets as part of their treatment, or who suffered from wasting as their disease progressed”. In the print the macaroni’s thinness is emphasized through his outstretched arms and shallow and sunken facial features.⁵¹ In the poem, the macaroni narrator gives an account of his appearance, noting in particular that “My cheeks are grown wondrously bony, / And grey, vey grey, are my hairs:”.⁵² The macaroni’s shoulders and head also appear to collapse into each other, which one could suggest was a result of his neck having been damaged by the weight of excessive wigs. Despite his decaying frame, he still attempts to present himself in the fashionable attire associated with the macaroni, as evidenced through his fraying club wig, which draws attention to the “patchy hair loss” that he was likely suffering from as a result of the treatment for the disease.⁵³ The macaroni’s sexual and financial extravagance have left him bewailing poverty. He is depicted clutching a private subscription list, his final attempt to support his fashionable lifestyle:

And trust, as they give it so freely,
By private subscription to raise,
Enough to maintain my genteely,
And sport with, the rest of my days.⁵⁴

Not too dissimilarly from Shebbeare’s Lord Flimsy who has to marry the wealthy heiress Arabella in order to pay off his debts, and who is recorded as having various bouts of syphilis, the decaying macaroni of the poem and print is revealed to be a victim of his own extravagance. Together, the print and poem explore the relationship between fashion and

⁵⁰ Anstey, *Liberality; or, the Decayed Macaroni. A Sentimental Piece*. ll. 105–106.

⁵¹ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, 130.

⁵² Anstey, *Liberality; or, the Decayed Macaroni. A Sentimental Piece*., ll. 3–4.

⁵³ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, 125.

⁵⁴ Anstey, *Liberality; or, the Decayed Macaroni. A Sentimental Piece*., ll. 137–140.

corruption. The satirical representation of the macaroni suggesting that the macaroni's pursuit of fashionability renders him diseased, deformed, and impoverished.

The language of disease, infection and contagion therefore became intimately tied to the foreign affectation like that embodied in the macaroni. Concerns over the spread of foreign fashions, and manners, were aligned with sexual infection, with France in particular being increasingly perceived as a threat to Britain. As Gallagher explains "the accusation of disease could be used to target different groups in different contexts, but it clearly retained its signifying power as a tool for scrutinizing the intrusion of the foreign into the familiar".⁵⁵ That is to say, authors deployed the rhetoric of disease as a means to challenge the perceived influence of the Grand Tour and foreign fashions on formation of the identity of young British men. In 1756, an anonymously published text entitled *The Devil upon crutches in England, or Night scenes in London. A Satirical Work* explicitly engaged with the rhetoric of disease. The moral infection of British men is framed as a direct result of French encouragement, as men become effeminized through their exposure to French fashions and manner. The companion to the Devil, Asmodeus, takes responsibility for the debauchery of the French:

I invented the Amusements [luxury, gaming, routs, drums ...] solely for the Use of the *French* Nation, whose natural Levity disposes them to adopt every Vice and Folly, that wears the Appearance of Diversion. But I was mistaken – the Infection spread – and *England*, who every Year sends over her most conspicuous Fools to improve [...] But by what unaccountable Fatality I know not, the *once* brave, rough, and victorious *English*, are entirely *Frenchified*.⁵⁶

Asmodeus positions vice as an infection, one which has penetrated England due to the process of travel. "[I]mmersed in Luxury and Sloth, mimicking the Manners of the Nation

⁵⁵ Gallagher, *Itch, Clap, Pox*, 158.

⁵⁶ By a Gentleman of Oxford, *The Devil upon Crutches In England, or Night Scenes in Lodnon. A Satirical Work. Written upon the Plan of the Celbrated Diable Boiteux of Monsieur LE Sage*. (London: Printed for Philip Hodges, and sold by Geo. and Alex Ewing, 1756), 4.

they ought most to despise”, the English are no longer “Objects of Ridicule, but Detestation”.⁵⁷ This sense of abhorrence is also captured in the article *CHARACTER of a MACARONI*, which was published in *The Town and Country Magazine* in May 1772. The author frames the spread of luxury and foppish identity as an infection: “The infection at St James’s was soon caught in the city, and we have now Macaronies of every denomination, from the colonel of the Train’d Bands down to the errand boy”.⁵⁸ Contagion, then, became a means through which authors could frame the importation of foreign vices as something to be challenged, something dangerous to the British constitution and the British body, while simultaneously allowing them to question the macaroni’s sexual identity.

In particular, authors were able to use syphilis as a means to explore the wider impact of luxury on society. By framing consumption as an infection, authors exposed how the excessive engagement with foreign luxury had ramifications beyond just the macaroni himself. Tobias Smollett, in his 1776 work *Travels Through France and Italy*, suggests that the consequences of sexual activity abroad had the potential to irredeemably damage a young man’s future. Writing specifically about Italy in this instance, Smollett’s comments nevertheless speak to concerns about European travel more generally, and the impact exposure to European countries has on young British men:

I have seen in different parts of Italy, a number of raw boys, whom Britain seemed to have poured forth on purpose to bring her national character into contempt: ignorant, petulant, rash, and profligate, without any knowledge or experience of their own, without any director to improve their understanding, or superintend their conduct. One engages in play with an infamous gamester, and is stripped perhaps in the very first partie: another is poxed and pillaged by an antiquated cantatrice: a third is bubbled by a knavish antiquarian; and a fourth is laid under contribution by a dealer in pictures. Some turn fiddlers, and pretend to compose: but all of them talk familiarly of the arts, and return finished connoisseurs and coxcombs, to their own country.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ By a Gentleman of Oxford, *The Devil upon Crutches In England, or Night Scenes in London. A Satirical Work*, 105–6, 81.

⁵⁸ ‘CHARACTER of a MACARONI’, *The Town and Country Magazine, or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment*, May 1772, 243.

⁵⁹ Tobias Smollett, *Travels Through France and Italy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 241.

Smollett neatly summarises the alternative type of education young men could receive while partaking in the Grand Tour and travelling through Europe. Documenting the types of profligate behaviours that young men could be exposed to, Smollett suggests that overindulgence renders these young men coxcombs. The primary concern of Smollett's account, however, is not the individuals themselves; but the damage this type of behaviour does not only to Britain's national reputation, but also to Britain's future prosperity. These young gentlemen who debase themselves abroad are the future of Britain, yet they are reduced to "coxcombs", who learned little on their travels other than how to acquire large debts. Moreover, the longevity of Britain's very future is called into question as the young gentlemen become "poxed and pillaged by an antiquated cantatrice". Young men, Smollett suggests, by exposing themselves to syphilis are having their potential futures taken away: they are "pillaged" by the European women who infect them. In his extensive study of the Grand Tour, Jeremy Black notes the significance of venereal disease as a perceived threat to Britain's future posterity, as "the ravages of which substantially defied contemporary medicine, and the consequences of which could be serious not only from the point of individual health, but also because it harmed the chances of securing heirs to an estate".⁶⁰ In this sense the threat of fashionable contagion from France and Italy is actualized through its physical infection of young British bodies, a threat that impacts upon the future population and prosperity of the nation.

The potential consequences of syphilis therefore had ramifications beyond the young infected gentleman. In particular, the weakening of the male line became a prominent concern for contemporaries. It is not only the male who is infected, but his offspring as well. Although knowledge of pathology in the eighteenth century was limited in relation to

⁶⁰ Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Sandpiper Books, 1999), 190.

syphilis, there was a general acceptance among medical professionals that syphilis could pass onto offspring causing associated medical complications which left the male line weak and feminized:

Should the poison at such a time be less active the child may be born with a healthy appearance, but after some time, its body will break out with sores and boils. But when the poison at the time of conception lies dormant; either naturally, or by some remedy which the parents have used, and by which it has not been quite extirpated but only weakened, the children will scarce ever get any venereal disease. The contagion has then undergone a change, and causes the rickets, or scrophuloe (des ecroules) or other distemper that we hardly would expect to arise from such a cause. Such children grow tender and weak, as also their offspring, from generation to generation. In such a manner a whole nation may degenerate and be corrupted.⁶¹

Taken from Nicholas Rosen von Rosenstein's 1776 text *The Disease of Children, and Their Remedies*, the passage clearly articulates the concerns over syphilis. Texts of this ilk were numerous and became part of what Quétel calls an "immense moral crusade".⁶² Although not explicitly about macaronis, Rosen von Rosenstein's moral crusade sat alongside the debates over the importation of effeminacy and the desire to regulate foppish behaviours in order to prevent the spread of the infection. This concern is articulated in a letter 'To Mr. Town', published in *The Connoisseur* No. 22 (June, 1754):

The modern method of education is indeed so little calculated to promote virtue and learning, that it is almost impossible the children should be wiser or better than their parents. The country 'squire seldom fails of seeing his son as dull and aukward [sic] a looby as himself; while the debauched or foppish man of quality breeds up a rake or an empty coxcomb, who brings new diseases into the family, and fresh mortgages on the estate.⁶³

There is a prominent concern that each generation is getting progressively weaker as "new diseases" are represented as weakening genteel lineage and impacting fertility. Foppish men can breed only effeminate empty coxcombs. As Harvey elucidates, the "period witnessed an

⁶¹ Nicholas Rosen von Rosenstein, *The Diseases of Children, and Their Remedies*, trans. Andrew Sparrman (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1776), 323.

⁶² Quétel, *The History of Syphilis*, 6.

⁶³ George Colman and Bonnell Thornton, eds., 'To Mr. TOWN', *The Connoisseur*, no. 22 (June 1754): 129.

intensification of fears about English masculinity in an international context, which fed into alarmist comments about effeminacy and male fertility”.⁶⁴ Importantly, the article goes on to explicitly link these foppish identities to diseases, which in turn further weaken the family line. Rather than education promoting virtue and learning, the author indicates that they merely endorse vice by prioritizing luxury. The nation’s future prosperity is called into question, as “empty coxcomb[s]” are not only weakening the physical hereditary line, but also increasingly running their estates into debts. In his discussion of education (or rather lack-thereof), foppish proclivities, gambling debts, and diseases, the author presents the Grand Tour as a challenge to the British character. The macaroni, therefore provided an example of the young gentlemen who became corrupted and infected by French fashions and diseases while on the Grand Tour. The macaroni, authors suggested, were effeminate individuals who threatened the nation’s financial and genetic prosperity by contaminating other young men on their return to Britain.

The Military Macaroni

Prior to the Macaroni’s popularisation in the 1770s the fop had increasingly begun to be associated with violence. It was a violence that was tied up with notions of Jacobitism, the threat the Stuart line posed to the established monarchy, and debates over the correct version of masculinity. Like the fop’s fashionability, the macaroni’s engagement with violence was represented as an extreme and exaggerated expression of the figure’s effeminacy. Literary critics who have considered the fop of the mid-century provide an account of a figure prone to impulsive and violent actions. Philip Carter, for example, notes that: “modern effeminacy had eroded men’s ability to think in a consistently rational manner, prompting individuals to

⁶⁴ Harvey, ‘The History of Masculinity’, 311.

engage in rash acts of violence such as duelling”.⁶⁵ Previously considered a paradigm of chivalrous masculine behaviour, by the mid-eighteenth century the duel had more negative connotations. Carter indicates that the individual’s propensity for excess and lack of understanding reaches beyond the realms of fashion, extending into the breach of acceptable social behaviours, in this instance violence. The fop’s lack of rationality, in relation to violent acts, is further explored by Heather Ellis, who connects the “unmanly behaviour” of the fop with that of the adolescent boy, both of whom she states have “a tendency towards uncontrolled violence”.⁶⁶ In both these critics’ accounts, the fop’s violence is not the regimented or controlled violence of the military figure, but rather the excessive, sporadic, impulsive, and reckless violence of an individual who lacks rationality or control of their behaviour. Ellis goes further than Carter in this instance by explicitly linking the fop-Jacobite’s violent propensity to Oxford University Students in the early to mid-eighteenth century, many of whom she states were part of a “foppish subculture”, which is here meant to mean Stuart subculture, who “were strongly criticized for engaging in violent riots in favour of the deposed Stuart family”.⁶⁷ The propensity of mid-century fops for confrontation and violence, noted by Carter and Ellis, provides a stark contrast to the likes of Sir Fopling from the Restoration whose passivity is discussed in Chapter 2.

In part, the transformation of the fop from a docile and harmless character, to a violent figure was a response to, and reflection of, the framing of Bonnie Prince Charlie and his forces as savage Highlanders. As a figure intimately tied up with notions of Stuart identity, as discussed at length in Chapter 2, representations of and responses to the fop were influenced by alterations in perceptions of the Stuart line. That is to say, the fops of the

⁶⁵ Philip Carter, ‘An “effeminate” or “Efficient” Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary’, *Textual Practice* 11, no. 3 (1997): 433.

⁶⁶ Heather Ellis, ‘Foppish Masculinity, Generational Identity and the University Authorities in Eighteenth-Century Oxbridge’, *Cultural and Social History* 11, no. 3 (2014): 375.

⁶⁷ Ellis, ‘Foppish Masculinity’, 375.

Restoration were harmless and comical because Charles II, despite his flaws, was perceived as an amicable and likeable figure. The later examples of fops, however, were aligned with violence and military identity in response to the growing fear surrounding the Jacobite army's invasion and the threat the Stuart line posed to the newly established Hanoverian rule.

Writing in 1696 the author of *Character of a Jacobite* was confident in their assertion that: "if James provides no better Collonels and Captains than they [fops], to assist him in the recovery of his Throne, he'll never come over, nor have occasion for those Nicompoops to secure it for him".⁶⁸ This confidence, however, was not shared by critics of Jacobitism in the mid-century, who were warier about the Jacobites' military capabilities particularly in light of Bonnie Prince Charlie's success at the Battle of Prestonpans and his subsequent march down to Derby. Even poems by Jacobite supporters recognized the tension between Bonnie Prince Charlie's representation as an effeminate Stuart figure, and his military endeavours. *A Poem by a Lady on seeing His Royal Highness the Prince Regent* published in 1745, draws attention to the possibility that Bonnie Prince Charlie's appearance might undermine his authority:

O Glorious YOUTH! 'tis evidently plain,
By thy majestic eyes thou'rt born to reign;
But when thy warlike and extended Hand,
Directs the foremost Ranks to charge or strand,
Retract thy Face, lest that, so fair and young,
Should call in Doubt the Orders of thy Tongue.⁶⁹

The poem points to a tension between Bonnie Prince Charlie's youthful appearance and Bonnie Prince Charlie as a military leader. In order to address the tension between Bonnie

⁶⁸ Young gentleman., *The Character of the Beaux, in Five Parts ... to Which Is Added The Character of a Jacobite / Written by a Young Gentleman.*, Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 1664:15 (London printed : [s.n.], 1696), 45.

⁶⁹ Anon, 'A Poem by a Lady on Seeing His Royal Highness the Prince Regent', in *A Full Collection of All Poems upon Charles, Prince of Wales, Regent of the Kingdoms of Scotland, England, France and Ireland, and Dominions Thereunto Belonging, Published since His Arrival in Edinburgh the 17th Day of September, till the 1st of November, 1745.*, 1745, 21–22.

Prince Charlie's success in his military endeavours to advance through England and his presentation as effeminate, his opponents explored the relationship between foppishness and violence. Opponents of Bonnie Prince Charlie drew on the fop's association with excess and ineptitude and applied them to the new military context. The representation and distinction between military prowess and the irrational violence of the Highlanders, which became central to depictions of the rebellion, shaped the way in which violence in relation to the fop was constructed.

The alteration of the fop in light of depictions of Bonnie Prince Charlie and his forces, has to also be read in relation to the wider military discussion of the period, and the ways in which military failure and success was read and represented, in line with ideas of masculinity. In her discussion of the way in which war shaped readings of masculinity across the period (but with a specific focus on the war of Austrian Succession), Karen Harvey observes that:

military and naval campaigns had considerable impact on discussions of masculinity and politeness in particular. During this period, either setbacks in conflict or the cessation of victorious combat could spark debate about what kind of masculinity would most effectively serve the British nation.⁷⁰

Failure in battle was conflated with effeminacy, while victory revealed a strong and ideal masculine model. Military men became "attractive heroes", while their unsuccessful counterparts were figured as "effeminate" fops.⁷¹ However, the distinction between hero and fop did not always hold up, as Harvey suggests, as while an individual could be a hero in one instance, in a subsequent battle he could become an example of effeminacy. In the case of Bonnie Prince Charlie, critics regularly conflated his beauty and his seeming military ineptitude in the wake of Culloden to reveal his foppish effeminacy. However, during the period in which Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobite forces were advancing through England, it was harder for his critics to deploy this tactic. Instead, they engaged with the

⁷⁰ Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity', 308.

⁷¹ Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity', 308.

concept of excess, to explore how Bonnie Prince Charlie and his forces were foppish. They argued that the Jacobite's display of violence was unmanly and foppish because it was excessive, and Bonnie Prince Charlie, as their leader was ineffective and therefore effeminate as he was unable to control it.

Bonnie Prince Charlie was represented as “the *Highland Prince*”, and therefore responsible for the actions of his Highland forces.⁷² But the Highlanders were simultaneously represented as beholden to no one: “undisciplined Savages paying no Regard to any Authority but their own Inclinations”.⁷³ Bonnie Prince Charlie, his critics argued, was an ineffective leader unable to manage his own forces. In *A Plain Narrative or Journal* (1746), Michael Hughes gives an account of the Rebellion from the viewpoint of a Hanoverian soldier. The strong rhetoric used by Hughes in relation to the Highlanders was typical of the times, he describes them as a “vagabond crew” who exercised “shocking, hellish Cruelty”.⁷⁴ Although history has challenged this image, revealing how the Prince was “humane and courteous” in his dealings with the enemy and always attempted to curb any excessive acts of violence, to contemporaries the savage Highlander was a powerful image.⁷⁵ Hanoverian supporters were able to use the image of the savage Highlander to expose and perpetuate the idea of Bonnie Prince Charlie's effeminacy and ineffectiveness. As their leader, Bonnie Prince Charlie was perceived as responsible for the Highlander's actions: “The Cruelties and Murders that have been *perpetrated*, and the Rapine and Desolation that have been *committed* by the rebellious Highlanders, under your Command”.⁷⁶ Critics therefore pursued the line of

⁷² Michael Hughes, *A Plain Narrative or Journal of the Late Rebellion, Begun in 1745: Describing Its Progress in Scotland, and England, till the Full and Glorious Defeat at Culloden*. (London: Henry Whitridge, 1746), 10.

⁷³ Anon, *Alexis: Or the Worthy Unfortunate. Being a True Narrative of the Affecting Case of a Young Gentleman, Whose Ruin Was Occasioned by the Late Rebellion* (London; printed for J. Cobham, 1747), 6.

⁷⁴ Hughes, *A Plain Narrative or Journal of the Late Rebellion*, 7–8.

⁷⁵ Frank McLynn, *Charles Edward Stuart: A Tragedy in Many Acts* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 159.

⁷⁶ *Remarks on the Pretender's Eldest Son's Second Declaration, Dated the 10th of October, 1745.*, version Second Edition Corrected., Second Edition Corrected. (London: E.Say, 1745), 57.

thought that as their leader, Bonnie Prince Charlie was just as responsible for any enactments of violence perpetuated by his forces. Furthermore, his forces use of excessive violence was presented as a testament to his failure as their leader.

Explorations of violence, therefore, became a medium through which authors could challenge the fop as a figure representative of Stuart identity. *The Rambler No.195* (28th January, 1752) captures the sentiment of uncontrolled violence in a letter detailing the escapades of a group of “wits, heirs, and fops” in London:⁷⁷

They posted to a tavern, where they recovered their alacrity, and after two hours of obstreperous jollity, burst out big with enterprise, and panting for some occasions to signalize their prowess. They proceeded vigorously through two streets, and with very little opposition dispersed a rabble of drunkards less daring than themselves, then rolled two watchmen in the kennel, and broke the windows of a tavern.⁷⁸

The impetuous actions of the fops and wits are emphasized in this passage, as they expose themselves as undisciplined and disrespectful. But most importantly, in this instance, the fops’ violence is revealed to be perpetuated against “a rabble of drunkards less daring than themselves”. The implication is that the fops picked on people weaker than themselves in order to ensure their victory. The framing of the Jacobite forces engaged with similar ideas, and it was suggested the Highlanders’ violence was enacted against the public, or stragglers. However, when the Highlanders came up against the armies of Cumberland, the rhetoric shifts and they are represented as cowards: “so fearful were these paltry *Highland* Heroes of Duke *William*’s Name, that they scoured all the Way like *Sampson*’s foxes”.⁷⁹ Narratives in which the Jacobites can at once enact violence and be cowards was repurposed in the fop, whose violence was aimed at those below them.

⁷⁷ Samuel Johnson, *No. 195 The Rambler*, (London: John Payne, 1752), 177.

⁷⁸ Johnson, *No. 195 The Rambler*, 179.

⁷⁹ Hughes, *A Plain Narrative or Journal of the Late Rebellion*, 18.

In *The Connoisseur* No. 10, published in April 1754, the ineffective military man and the fop are conflated. The author reports that military men:

Instead of cultivating their minds, they are wholly taken up in adorning their bodies, and look upon gallantry and intrigue as essential parts of their character. To glitter in the boxes or at an assembly, is the full display of their politeness, and to be the life and soul of a lewd brawl almost the only exertion of their courage; insomuch that there is a good deal of justice in *Macheath's* raillery, when he says "if it was not for us, and the other gentlemen of the sword, *Drury-Lane* would be uninhabited."⁸⁰

Rather than the traditional image of a military man, in this instance they are described in terms of the fop, evoking notions of excessive fashion, theatre, and a lack of intellect. Just as Bonnie Prince Charlie was presented as placing more import on his clothing than his military learning, more proficient in "the graceful and ornamental branches of his studies than in the more solid and practical acquirements", so too was the fop.⁸¹ The fop, therefore, in the wake of Bonnie Prince Charlie could be both effeminate and violent. As acts of violence were represented and understood in terms of excess, the fop's violence could be used as evidence of the figure's foolishness and lack of control. Likewise, if the fop failed in his military endeavours, he was represented as effeminate and cowardly.

The complex relationship between Stuart masculinity, military identity, and the fop is visualized in interesting ways in depictions of macaronis. A number of prints depict macaronis in military garb, as well as a number of written accounts presenting macaronis as inept military figures. Furthermore, macaronis were often depicted in the process of either being violently attacked, or unsuccessfully attempting to inflict injury on another. That is to say, macaronis were perceived as both perpetrators of violence as well as victims of violence. The macaroni's depiction in military garb therefore was part of the performance of the epitome of masculinity. However, the macaroni fails to meet the standards of military

⁸⁰ George Colman and Bonnell Thornton, eds., 'Untitled Item', *The Connoisseur*; London, no. 10 (April 1754): 58.

⁸¹ By the Author of "The Military Career of the Celebrated Earl of Peterborough, 'Charles Edward Stewart; Or, Vicissitudes in the Life of a Royal Exile', *Bentley's Miscellany*, 1837-1868, January 1848, 493.

masculine identity as is represented as promoting style over substance, and as such were seen to promote effeminacy and ineffectualness.

Much like the Grand Tour then, the military was also criticized as promoting effeminacy among Britain's young men. The military was also represented as particularly susceptible to effeminacy, as it relied on the same homosocial development of shared experiences that Hume had identified as so dangerous an aspect of the Grand Tour. Brown despairs at the state of Britain's defence, declaring that "Effeminacy, the wretched Affectation of fashionable and trifling Discourse" now "prevails in the Armies of *Great-Britain*".⁸² Concluding that there are none suitable to rise to the occasion of Britain's defence, Brown deploys a vocabulary that explicitly links impotence with effeminacy.

[A]s our Manners are degenerated into those of Women, so are our Weapons of Offence. But as this Home-Security arises only from common Impotence; it is probable, that other Nations may soon know of what Materials we are made; and therefore, our Danger is likely to arise from without.⁸³

Effeminacy was, according to Brown, incompatible with military endeavours as it made men ineffective and incapable of providing military support to the nation: "Here then we find another ruling Defect in the national Capacity of an effeminate People. How few can arise, amidst this general *Dissipation* of manners, capable of conducting it's Fleets and Armies?"⁸⁴ Rife with sexual innuendo, Brown conflates male genitalia with "weapons" to address the impact of effeminacy on British military capability. Brown's concerns that there were no men fit to defend the nation were shared by other authors. In the prologue to the 1773 play titled *The Macaroni. A Comedy* by Robert Hitchcock, the male populace is presented as effeminate and cowardly:

When Britain calls her valiant sons to arms,
Their milky souls no martial ardour warms,

⁸² Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 1: vol 2, 113.

⁸³ Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 1: vol 1, 79.

⁸⁴ Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 1: vol 1, 53.

For all their courage lodges in the heel,
And fear's the only passion they can feel.⁸⁵

Hinting at the military inability of the macaroni, Hitchcock implies that the macaroni's obsession with luxury and self-interest undermines his loyalty to his country, as "fear" is the figure's only motivation.

The macaroni articulated these concerns in visual ways. Engaging with the idea that clothing could, and did, expose character, made the medium of caricature "particularly well-suited to articulating the obsession with surface and self that drove the macaroni phenomenon".⁸⁶ Caricature provided a means through which one could "look deep beneath the surface of a man and avoid the unspecified dangers of entrapment by deceptive, artificial character".⁸⁷ It made characters and character legible through the manipulation and presentation of bodily features. Therefore, in their depiction of effeminate military men, caricatures could use outward features and scenarios to reveal the macaroni's emasculation and sexual inability. In the early 1770s, Matthew and Mary Darly produced a large variety of macaroni caricatures which presented a number of macaronis from a variety of occupations. Within these collections were two prints focused specifically on the military macaroni. These prints exposed the connection many contemporary critics were making between the importation of luxury and the potential for a physical invasion. Published in 1771, *The Martial Macaroni* (Figure 4.8), captures the fear that effeminacy would negatively impact upon military prowess. The soldier's club wig stretches out behind him, paralleling the sword that rests at his hip. Rather than being ready to defend his country, the martial macaroni appears a fraud, his sword becoming an ornament. The inadequacy of the macaroni in matters of defence is further explored in another print from the collection published in 1772, *The*

⁸⁵ Robert Hitchcock, *The Macaroni. A Comedy. As It Is Performed at the Theatre-Royal York*. (York : printed by A. Ward, in Coney-Street, 1773), prologue I.

⁸⁶ Rauser, 'Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni', 108.

⁸⁷ Rauser, 'Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni', 107.

Macaroni Captains (Figure 4.9). The print depicts two gentlemen being attacked by some geese, with the goose on the far right of the image latching onto the long wig of one of the captains. The poignancy of the wig coming under attack lays in the wig's status as the ultimate marker of macaroni excess. The wig, like the rest of the macaroni's fashionable clothing, impedes him from defending himself. Corrupted by clothing, the macaroni becomes so inept that they are barely able to protect themselves from geese, let alone defend the nation from any real form of attack. The figures' inability to defend themselves is suggestive of a sexual impotency, articulated through the phallic sword's uselessness.

The Town and Country Magazine bewailed the fallen state of British men, who were presented as unfit decedents of true heroes. In an article titled *CHARACTER of a MACRARONI* (May 1772), the author evokes past glorious battles to exemplify the pitiful state of the current breed of military macaroni:

Wither are the manly vigour and athletic appearance of our forefathers flown? Can these be their legitimate heirs? Surely no; a race of effeminate, self admiring, emaciated fribbles can never have descended in a direct line from the heroes of Poitiers and Agincourt.⁸⁸

Recalling famous battles from the Hundred Years War, the author reveals the fallen state of the current military. Full of effeminate, vain and emaciated macaroni, the author suggests that the military is incapable of protecting Britain from invasion. The author continues, lamenting that Britain in “the most perilous times, is to be defended by such *things as these*”.⁸⁹ The macaroni's state is perceived as so base that the author does not even dignify them with the title of men, rather they are reduced to “things”.

⁸⁸ ‘CHARACTER of a MACARONI’, 243.

⁸⁹ ‘CHARACTER of a MACARONI’, 243.



Figure 4.8

The Martial Macaroni. 1771. Published by M. Darly. Etching on laid paper, 19 x 13 cm. Lewis Walpole Library, Orbis Record 8348310.



THE MACARONI CAPTAINS.

Pub.^d Accord^g to Act. Sep^r. 17th. 1772. by M^r Darly (39) Strand.

Figure 4.9

The Macaroni Captains. 1772. Published by M. Darly. Etching on laid paper, 21 x 27 cm. Lewis Walpole Library, Orbis Record 8337732.

The Gender Ambiguity of the Macaroni

Depictions of the macaroni's impotence challenged the understanding of these figures as men. Macaroni's were regularly framed as "things" rather than men. Their lack of sense, military cowardice, and effeminate focus on luxury made the title of man unsuitable, and as a result led to a desire to label the figure in genderless terms. This representation of macaronis as cowardly and genderless can be seen in textual representations of The Vauxhall Affray in 1773. The Vauxhall Affray refers to an incident that supposedly occurred in Vauxhall Gardens, when an onlooker stepped in to defend a woman who felt threatened by the inappropriate attention of four macaronis; following a duel between the onlooker and a man hired by the four men, the macaronis are defeated and forced to retreat. A poem in response to this incident, titled *The Macaroniad, or, The Priest Triumphant* (1773), presents the macaronis gender as ambiguous:

But *Macaronies* are a sex
Which do philosophers perplex;
Tho' all the priests of VENUS' rites
Agree they are *Hermaphrodies*.⁹⁰

The macaroni "perplex[es]" philosophers, as the figure defies gendered or sexual categorization, and therefore is labelled as a hermaphrodite. The macaroni figure was commonly charged with being a hermaphrodite, with emphasis often placed on the macaroni's performance of their own gender ambiguity. A letter written to the Observer in the *Town and Country Magazine*, May 1774, declares that despite macaronis laying "claim to the masculine gender", they offer no proof of such a connection.⁹¹ Continuing, the letter

⁹⁰ Sir Henry Bate Dudley, *The Vauxhall Affray; or, the Macaronies Defeated : Being a Compilation of All the Letters, Squibs, &c. on Both Sides of That Dispute. With an Introductory Dedication to the Hon. Tho. Lyttleton, Esq* (London : sold by J. Williams, No. 39, Fleet-Street, and all the Booksellers in Town and Country, 1773), 59.

⁹¹ Hitchcock, *The Macaroni. A Comedy. As It Is Performed at the Theatre-Royal York.*, 246.

writer undermines the macaroni's claim to a male identity, associating the figure instead with the hermaphrodite:

A *thing* with a large nosegay, a laced tucker, and a perfumed toupee, is of the doubtful gender, and might, at least, be shewn for a hermaphrodite at Bartholomew fair. I have no father patience with *it*.⁹²

Reducing the macaroni to a “thing” and “it”, the writer questions the macaroni's categorization of their own gender. While not denying the anatomical sex of the macaroni, the writer does indicate that the figure's effeminacy would allow it to pass for a hermaphrodite. A similar sentiment is captured in another letter to the *Town and Country Magazine* published in January 1773. The letter draws on metamorphosis as evidence of the gender ambiguity of the macaroni, while recognizing that by birth at least, they were designed a man:

After a long journey I am once more returned to this capital, where I find every thing has undergone a metamorphosis: the men, or at least those who pretend to be of the male gender, seem, notwithstanding, their pretensions to be ashamed of their sex, and disguise the small remains of manhood which has been handed down to them by their progenitors.⁹³

The insinuation is that while performing an effeminate role, the macaroni is in reality male. But despite this, through their constant attempts to dissociate themselves from their own sex, they become feminized, to the extent that they “make the sex doubtful” and can be mistaken for females.⁹⁴ The confusion inspired by the macaroni is therefore presented as dangerous to understandings of gender distinctions.

Indeed, many texts suggest that the macaroni's embracing of gender ambiguity was a conscious strategy resulting from their own cowardice. Macaronis intend, some texts suggest,

⁹² ANTI_MACARONI, ‘To the OBSERVER’, *The Town and Country Magazine, or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment*, May 1774, 246.

⁹³ A Son of Old Roasi Bee, ‘To the EDITOR of the TOWN and COUNTRY MAGAZINE’, *The Town and Country Magazine, or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment*, January 1773, 15.

⁹⁴ ANTI-MACARONI, ‘To the MAN of PLEASURE’, *The Town and Country Magazine, or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment*, April 1783, 212.

to be mistaken for females. This is the case in representations of the Vauxhall Affray, mentioned briefly earlier. Mr. Fitz-Gerall, one of the macaronis involved in the dispute, faces public condemnation for his behaviour. He is designated a “noxious reptile” to which the designation of man would be a “*misnomer*”; furthermore, the macaroni is advised to embrace the female role to allow his continued appearance in society.⁹⁵ A correspondent informs the public that:

the *Macaroni Club* have had a meeting on the piteous situation of their brother member Mr. Fitz-Gerall, and have unanimously resolved to advise that unfortunate *petit maitre* to appear *only* in petticoats at Vauxhall for the remainder of the season, as the most likely method of escaping the chastisement due for his late unmanly and senseless conduct.⁹⁶

Mr. Fitz-Gerall is emasculated to the extent that he is warned to only wear petticoats in order to protect himself from further attacks at the pleasure gardens. Although framed as a sincere warning from friends to their “unfortunate” brother, the text acts to emphasize the absurd behaviour of the macaroni, revealing the fluidity with which they are happy to adopt, or present themselves as another gender.

The question of gender, or rather genderlessness, became central to depictions of macaronis across literature. Defined as “having characteristics of both sexes, or of neither; indeterminate in respect of sex; androgynous; hermaphrodite; spec. (of a man) effeminate, effete”, *Epicene* became a name deployed to indicate macaroni characters – evoking the Restoration trope of identifying a character through their name before they even make their stage debut.⁹⁷ The title character in Robert Hitchcock’s *The Macaroni. A Comedy* (1773) was tellingly called *Epicene*, meaning one of indeterminate sex. The narrative of the play constantly drew on the connotations of the name to comedic effect. First introducing the

⁹⁵ Dudley, *The Vauxhall Affray; or, the Macaronies Defeated: Being a Compilation of All the Letters, Squibs, &c. on Both Sides of That Dispute. With an Introductory Dedication to the Hon. Tho. Lyttleton, Esq.*, 65, 68, 67.

⁹⁶ Dudley, *The Vauxhall Affray; or, the Macaronies Defeated*, 71–72.

⁹⁷ ‘*Epicene*, Adj. and n.’, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 9 January 2020, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/63248>.

macaroni as “empty beings, scare the shades of men!”, the play continues to undermine the gender identity of Epicene.⁹⁸ Lord Promise, the libertine of the play declares “Upon my soul you make such large advance to the feminine gender, that in a little time ’twill be difficult to tell to which sex you belong”.⁹⁹ He takes the joke further, by suggesting that Epicene could pass for his sister in a ploy that Lord Promise is developing to ensnare a young lady.¹⁰⁰ While jokes at the fop’s expense were not unique to the latter half of the eighteenth century, the virility and volume of jokes relating to sexual and gender ambiguity were. Furthermore, latter examples of attacks on the macaroni’s gender identity were not reserved solely for male characters. In an inversion of the fop’s usual association with women as a source of their friendship, women instead became some of the macaroni’s biggest critics. Lady Fanny who is contractually obliged to marry Epicene, due to an ill-thought-out arrangement between their fathers, shows nothing but contempt for the macaroni: “Oh, I have not patience every day to see such crowds of mincing, whiffling, powder’d Master Jemmys fill our public places, who only want to assume the petticoat, to render them compleat Misses”.¹⁰¹ Fops are no longer feminized creatures, who enjoy female company and are adored by female companions. As Lady Fanny’s diatribe shows, fops through their transformation into macaroni’s had become something whose gender ambiguity made them despised.

The conclusion of the play emphasizes the un-masculine behaviour of Epicene, who is forced, at the threat of a sword, to defame his own character by repeating the following words of Lord Promise: “I confess, that a Macaroni is the most insignificant – insipid – useless – contemptible being – in the whole creation”.¹⁰² Following Epicene’s admittance of the follies of the macaroni Lord Promise orders him to “entirely quit the appearance of such a

⁹⁸ Hitchcock, *The Macaroni. A Comedy. As It Is Performed at the Theatre-Royal York.*, Prologue I.

⁹⁹ Hitchcock, *The Macaroni*, Act 1, Scene 1, Page 3.

¹⁰⁰ Hitchcock, *The Macaroni*, Act 1, Scene 1, Page 9.

¹⁰¹ Hitchcock, *The Macaroni*, Act 2, Scene 1, Page 18.

¹⁰² Hitchcock, *The Macaroni*, Act 5, Scene 2, Page 70.

despicable species, and endeavour to assume the Man”.¹⁰³ Yet, despite Epicene’s acquiescence in denouncing the macaroni, he is unable to comply with Promise’s order, declaring “That’s hard, nay, I am afraid impossible – You may as well bid me shake off my existence”.¹⁰⁴ Through this statement of impossibility Epicene affirms Promise’s insinuation that he is not a man, recognizing that neither his behaviour or looks are suitable for the title of male. Epicene’s commitment to his macaroni identity, and his affirmation of its integral stability to his sense of identity, fits with the general idea that the macaroni cannot be reformed. As James Evans explains, macaroni satires “tends to be formulaic, and ridiculous macaronis not likeable or capable of change”.¹⁰⁵ According to the conclusion of the play, the macaroni, by not only embracing effeminacy but in denouncing typically masculine gender characteristics, can never claim the title of being a man.

The Macaroni and the Representation of Violent Encounters

As something uncategorizable, a “thing” who does not ascribe to accepted gender and sexual distinctions, the macaroni’s status as ‘other’ was fully secured. The literary dehumanization of the figure, and its ‘othering’, allowed for a harsher representation of the figure’s bodily presence. The macaroni’s body became a site of physical contest – as neither male nor female, the figure’s body became something which needed to be challenged. This challenge to the macaroni’s body often manifested itself in violent terms. McGirr has drawn attention to this turn towards violence in relation to an 1788 print, entitled *An English Jack-Tar Giving Monsieur a Drubbing* (Figure 4.10).¹⁰⁶ With a backdrop of a dock the print depicts a slender

¹⁰³ Hitchcock, *The Macaroni*, Act 5, Scene 2, Page 70.

¹⁰⁴ Hitchcock, *The Macaroni*, Act 5, Scene 2, Page 70.

¹⁰⁵ James Evans, “‘The Dullissimo Maccaroni’: Masculinities in *She Stoops to Conquer*”, *Philological Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (December 2011): 46.

¹⁰⁶ McGirr, *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age*, 141–44.

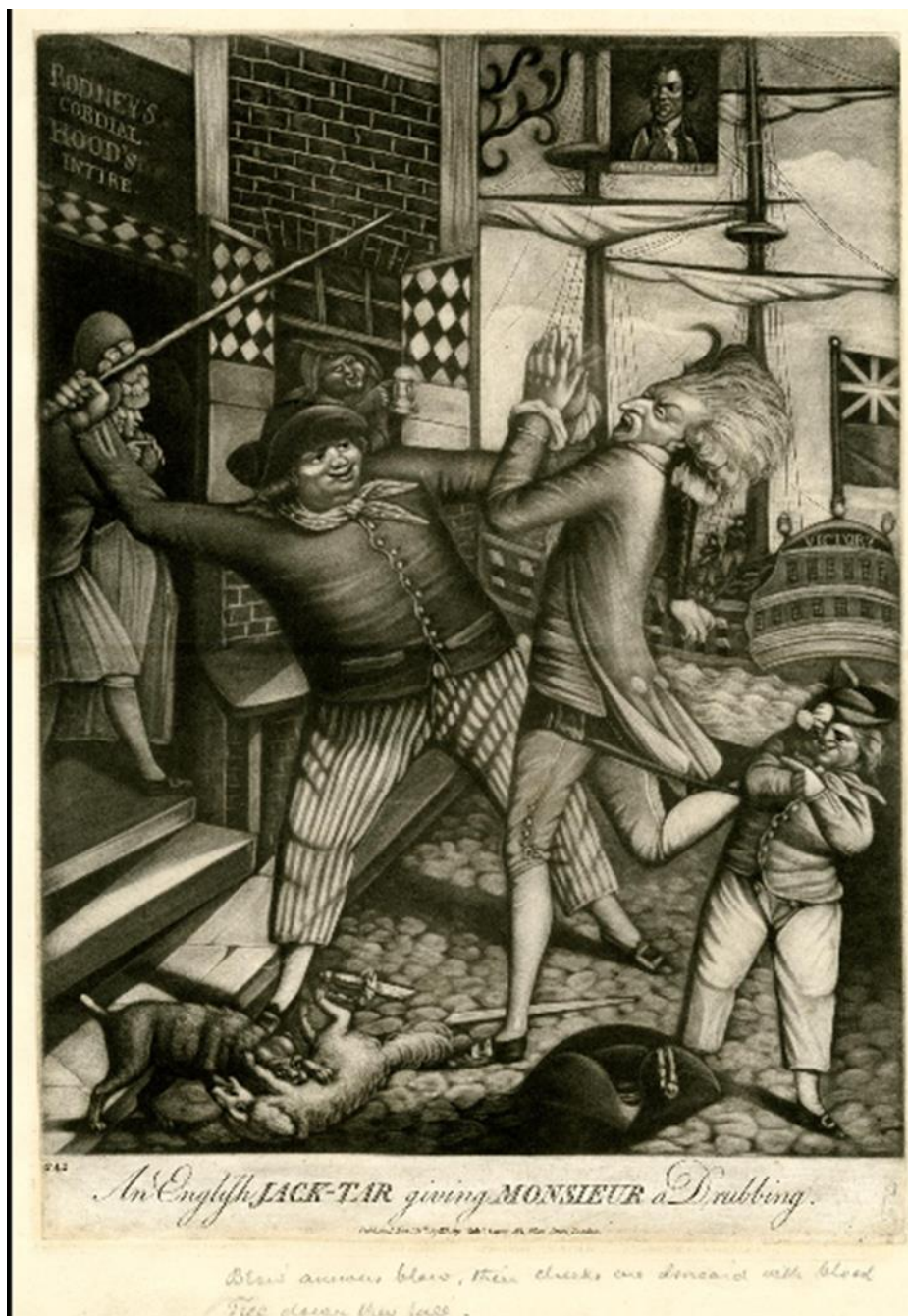


Figure 4.10

An English Jack-Tar giving Monsieur a Drubbing. 1788. By Robert Sayer. Mezzotint on paper, 348 x 250 mm. The British Museum, 2010,7081.1003.

fashionable man in a physical confrontation with a sailor, while the sailor's young son watches on, pointing and smirking at the scene. The young boy's presence in the scene brings a generational as well as a class dynamic to the print, revealing the desire to educate the young within the doctrine of simplicity and refinement in dress and foster a resentment for the excess of the macaroni figure. Commenting on the violence enacted in the print, McGirr notes that the "hostility projected against the Monsieur is more a product of fear than derision; he must be violently beaten only because he posed a real threat" to understandings of English masculinity.¹⁰⁷ With Monsieur often used as a catch-all derogatory term to signify deviant identities, be that Frenchman, fop, or macaroni, the print exposes the desire for violence against effeminate men. However, the violent impetus of caricatures as explored by McGirr can, I suggest, be further complicated by a sexual and gender dynamic which undercuts the prints and reveals much about attitudes towards the macaroni.

The extravagant wigs were the defining feature of the macaroni's attire and in many prints the wig acted as a metaphor for the phallus. The joke followed that an effeminacy in dress signalled, or rather led to, an effeminacy of the body. This effeminized body can generally be interpreted in one of two ways in prints from the period, it can be said to signal impotence, or be an indicator of gender nonconformity – but in both readings, the macaroni becomes 'unmanned' in prints through the depiction of someone (usually a woman or a butcher) cutting, or rather docking, his club wig. *Docking the Macaroni* (1773, Figure 4.11), embraces the British beef metaphor and symbol, to challenge the effeminacy and foreignness of the macaroni. The rounded features of the butcher provide a stark contrast to the skeletal figure of the macaroni, who appears to squirm as the butcher takes a large knife to the

¹⁰⁷ McGirr, *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age*, 144.

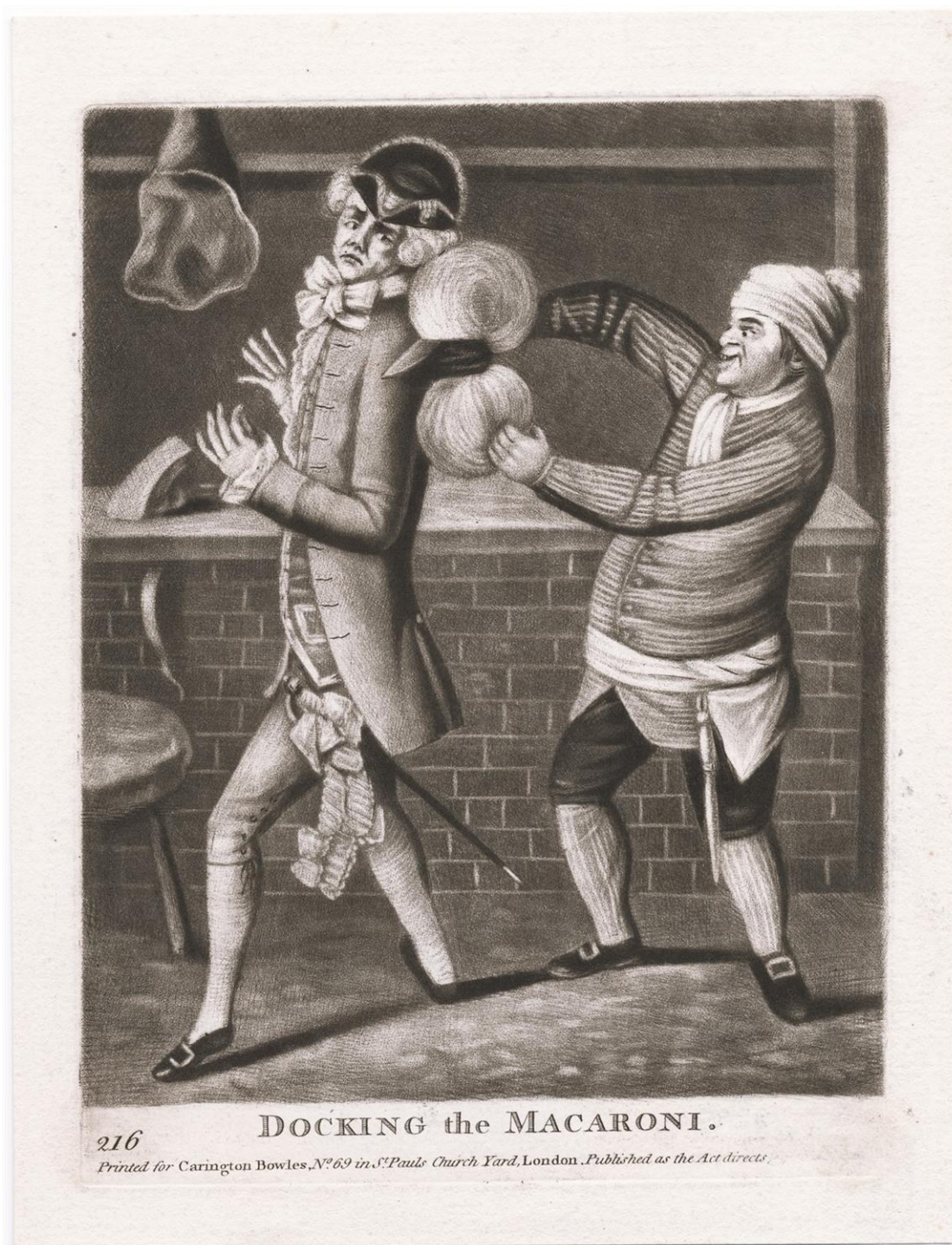


Figure 4.11

Docking the Macaroni. 1773. Printed for Carington Bowles. Mezzotint on laid paper, 18 x 13 cm. Lewis Walpole Library, Orbis Record 8275905.

macaroni's wig – in effect castrating the sodomite figure. The macaroni provides no challenge to the butcher, who smiles as he docks the large club of hair. Drawing on the phallic association of the wig as a sign of a man's virility, the inscription below the image reads "He dock'd his Fools noodle, and cut of his Tail: Now Now cry'd the Butcher the People may stare, At a Skull without Brains, & a Head without Hair". The opposition of the butcher, the symbol of British working-class identity, paired with the foreignness of the macaroni, reveals the real danger the macaroni was perceived as posing to a British sense of masculine identity, with the docking of the phallic wig emphasizing the macaroni's lack of maleness.

The overriding concern with male identity is also evident in the print *The Enraged Macaroni* (1773, Figure 4.12). At the forefront of the print stands a macaroni, his hand grips his sword hilt, but he is unable, or unwilling, to draw it. In front of him is a fisher woman, who waves her wares in front of the appalled-looking macaroni. Behind the macaroni, a woman hangs out of a liqueur shop window, scissors in one hand as she pulls down on the macaroni's elongated club wig with another. She appears to smirk as she cuts the macaroni's wig. Despite the macaroni's apparent rage and threats of "Blood and Wounds", he is overpowered by the two women. It is pertinent that in this print the macaroni comes under attack by a woman. While the docking images depicting women in the role of aggressor are intended to be comic, they also speak to a larger concern over the effeminacy of males and the impact this has on their ability to fulfil their male duties as husbands.



Figure 4.12

The Enraged Macaroni. July 13, 1773. Printed for John Bowles. Mezzotint on laid paper, 35 x 25 cm. Lewis Walpole Library, Orbis Record 8272204.

It is not, however, only the male macaroni who comes under attack in print. The female macaroni is also regularly depicted in scenes of violence: violence that, much like her male counterpart, focuses on her towering wig as a sign of her excess. *The Farmer's Daughter's return from London* (Figure 4.13) made by William Humphrey and published in 1777 is one such print. A young female macaroni is seen entering the humble abode of her farming family, she is bedecked in the height of fashionable attire, including a giant wig which is adorned by a hat decorated with ostrich feathers. The inappropriateness of the young macaroni's dress is emphasized through contrast. Not only is her dress extravagant in comparison to her family on the right of the print, but the impracticality of the wig is emphasized as it prohibits her entrance into the home. Her family look on aghast as the young macaroni's wig becomes entangled on the metal meat hooks which hang from the ceiling of the house. The meat hooks pull the young female's wig, holding her back as she attempts to advance into the house with her arms outstretched towards her family.

Interestingly, in the case of *The Farmer's Daughter's return from London*, it is not a person, but rather an object that is the cause of the macaroni's distress. It is noticeable that when the female macaroni is under attack, the attack is generally depicted as coming either from an object, or an animal. This contrasts the male macaroni who is attacked by other people and animals. For instance, in the print *Slight of Hand by a Monkey – or the Lady's Head Unloaded* (1776, Figure 4.14), a young lady is depicted in a state of horror as a monkey perched on the wall above her rips her wig from her head, leaving her bare head exposed. Next to the female macaroni stands a young butcher boy who delights at the scene; however, he is not an active agent in the macaroni's torment in the same way as in the docking prints of



Figure 4.13

The Farmer's Daughter's return from London. 1777. Print made by William Humphrey. Etching on paper, 250 x 353 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires (5456).



Figure 4.14

Slight of Hand by a Monkey – or the Lady's Head Unloaded. 1776. Published by Carington Bowles. Hand-coloured Mezzotint, 351 x 250 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires (4546).

the male macaroni. Furthermore, *The Feather'd Fair in a Fright* (1779, Figure 4.15), is not too dissimilar to the Military Macaroni print discussed earlier. However, in this instance, the two female macaronis are attacked by two ostriches rather than geese. Adorned in lace, frills, feathers, and bows, the two ladies attempt to defend themselves from the ostriches who peck at their large wigs. The inscription below records the macaroni's horror as they defend themselves with their fans: "With her Fan fought the Birds, in defence of her folly". Despite the macaroni's apparent fright at the situation the print encourages the reader to laugh at the women's plight: "You may laugh at their figures, for they're in a fright". The fact that both male and female macaronis come under attack in print is important as it illustrates how regardless of gender the extravagance of the macaroni figure was perceived by contemporaries as dangerous and worthy of attack due to the implications of excessive fashionability to conceptions of identity.

A common trope in depictions of male macaronis as has been discussed throughout this chapter is their sexual identity. Presenting a challenge to the traditional wife and husband dynamic through evoking cuckolding imagery, *The Macaroni husband henpeck'd* (Figure 4.16), published in 1777, reveals a wife attacking her foppish husband with a candle stick for interrupting her sexual escapade with another male. The macaroni appears more concerned with protecting his wig than with confronting his wife's infidelity. The wife takes on the masculine role as she controls the action of the scene, the macaroni becoming a passive participant. It is this very passivity which is at the heart of the image, the suggestion being that the macaroni is more concerned with clothes than his wife, thus forcing her to seek satisfaction outside of the marital bed. Furthermore, McNeil reveals the trope of 'unsexing' the male through prints which would create the suggestion of female genitalia either through



Figure 4.15

The Feather'd Fair in a Fright. 1779. After John Collet and Published by Carington Bowles. Etching on paper, 520 x 375 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires (5621).



Figure 4.16

The Macaroni Husband Henpeck'd. October 9, 1777. Printed by R. Marshall. Hand-coloured etching on laid paper, 46 x 56 cm. Lewis Walpole Library, Orbis Record 9049518.

the folds of the trousers or through a lack of folds, presenting the macaroni as possessing no sexual organ at all.¹⁰⁸ It is this process of ‘unsexing’, I argue, that marks a shift in the fop’s presentation. Although always presented as something ‘other’, the fop prior to caricature was still dominantly presented as male, albeit a feminized male. By unsexing the macaroni, caricaturists present the figure as something other. While positioned as something which does not conform to accepted social understandings of gendered and sexual identity, the macaroni still occupies a sexualized position, albeit a position of failure and ambiguity.

The sexual failure, or incapability of macaronis in relation to women, is further captured in a print also published in 1777 titled *The married macaroni: Alas! Poor Benedick* (Figure 4.17). There are a number of ways to interpret this print. Drawing on the title, one reading would suggest that the print is engaging with the cuckold trope drawn on in the previous print. This caricature once again draws on the macaroni’s complicity in his own cuckolding through the suggestion of his effeminacy and disinterestedness. As McNeil explains,

Whereas in the early years of the century the foppish paraphernalia of court dress was held to attract women and enhance ‘heterosexual’ allure, by the era of the macaroni, such dress was frequently interpreted as an irritation to women, which could also connote a lack of interest or ability in heterosexual desire and performance.¹⁰⁹

The ridiculousness of the macaroni’s clothes, therefore, revealed his indifference to his wife. This, in turn, is suggested in the print by him walking apart from his wife, who instead walks arm in arm with her lover who appears to be pointing and laughing at the cuckolded macaroni in front of him. It is not only the horns spouting from the macaroni’s wig that emphasizes his embarrassing predicament, but he is also left holding a child in his arms, while his wife is apparently absent. Drawing on the established trope of impotence, the print uses the phallic

¹⁰⁸ McNeil, *Pretty Gentlemen: Macaroni Men and the Eighteenth-Century Fashion World*, 158.

¹⁰⁹ McNeil, *Pretty Gentlemen: Macaroni Men and the Eighteenth-Century Fashion World*, 151.



Figure 4.17

The married macaroni: Alas! Poor Benedick. 1777. Publisher unknown. Etching, 21 x 27 cm. Lewis Walpole Library, Orbis Record 6628834.

symbols of the sword, club wig, and walking stick, paired with the cuckold imagery to signal the macaroni's ineffectual, or potentially non-existent, heterosexual activity. An alternative reading, suggested by the Lewis Walpole Library's notes on the image, suggests that the fashionable couple are pointing and laughing at the effeminate macaroni. According to the notes, the macaroni's effeminacy is signalled by the "diminutive woman emerging from his left shoulder".¹¹⁰ Although different interpretations, both readings of the print focus on the isolation and effeminacy of the macaroni figure, emphasizing his position as a sexual outsider within society. The ambiguity of the images speaks to the indistinctness of the figure: macaronis are repeatedly represented in sexualized scenes, yet their sexuality is either unknown, deemed unacceptable, or rejected.

In a number of prints, macaronis are presented as actively seeking sexual interactions. For instance, in the 1772 print titled *The Macaroni Gallant Jilted* (Figure 4.18), a macaroni is depicted in the foreground of the print, paying for the services of a prostitute. Behind his back the prostitute can be seen beckoning another man, who, emerging from behind a curtain, holding a whip, moves towards the macaroni. Capturing the undercurrent of violence within the image, the verse which adorns the print reads:

To the Jilt says Sir Macaron, love me my Honey;
 I am yours, returns She but first down with your Money.
 Tis done when her Bully, still ready at Call,
 Whips in, and turns Macarons Honey to Gall.¹¹¹

Notwithstanding the macaroni's attempts to engage in a sexual experience, he is nevertheless duped out of his money, and as the print and verse implies, violently rejected for his imposition. In a similar scene of rejection, a print from 1774 titled *The Adventurous*

¹¹⁰ 'The Married Macaroni [Graphic]: Alas! Poor Benedick. - Yale University Library, accessed 9 January 2020. <https://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:292097>.

¹¹¹ 'Image Gallery: The Macaroni Gallant Jilted', British Museum, accessed 9 January 2020. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2010-7081-1281.



Figure 4.18

The Macaroni Gallant Jilted. 1772. Made by William Dickinson and published by John Bowles. Hand-coloured mezzotint with some etching, 352 x 252 mm. The British Museum, 2010, 7081.1281.

Macaroni, or the Three Jolly Blades, the Esqr. Parson & Doctor (Figure 4.19) portrays a macaroni as he attempts to climb onto a roof with the help of two companions, in an attempt to reach a girl in the upper rooms of a home. The macaroni reaches out to the girl who remains confined behind the window – symbolizing the macaroni’s ultimate failure to obtain his desires.

It was not only in caricature where the contempt of women towards macaronis was expressed. In February 1774, the monthly magazine *The Macaroni, Scavoir Vivre, and Theatrical Magazine* published a letter signed Jeffry Hoopcrack. The letter offered the story of a macaroni and a maid for the amusement of the reader. The macaroni, Hoopcrack reports, “had long made a frizeling kind of love” to the maid, but the girl was “averse to any in the likeness of a monkey and had constantly rejected his courtship”.¹¹² The term “frizeling” along with the account of the maid’s rejection, emphasizes the ineffectual and nonthreatening aspect of the macaroni’s advancement. Being drunk one day, the macaroni accosted the maid while she was employed in washing. He “swore he would kiss her, and must”.¹¹³ His impertinency was rewarded as the maid “proved too strong for him; and between her and the two chair-women, he soon found himself with his backside in a large tub of suds, where they lathered him handsomely and kept him till he had paid for his rudeness, by begging pardon with the submission of a slave”.¹¹⁴ The story enacts a shift in socially accepted power dynamics, with the effeminate macaroni being overpowered by a woman, albeit with the help of two others. The macaroni fails to fulfil the dominant male role, therefore becoming a joke as his adherence to excessive fashions leave him unmanned. Consistently deployed in a

¹¹² Anon, ‘The Macaroni Savoir Vivre, and Theatrical Magazine’ (London, s.n 1773), 201–2, British Library.

¹¹³ Anon, ‘The Macaroni Savoir Vivre, and Theatrical Magazine’, 202.

¹¹⁴ Anon, ‘The Macaroni Savoir Vivre, and Theatrical Magazine’, 202.

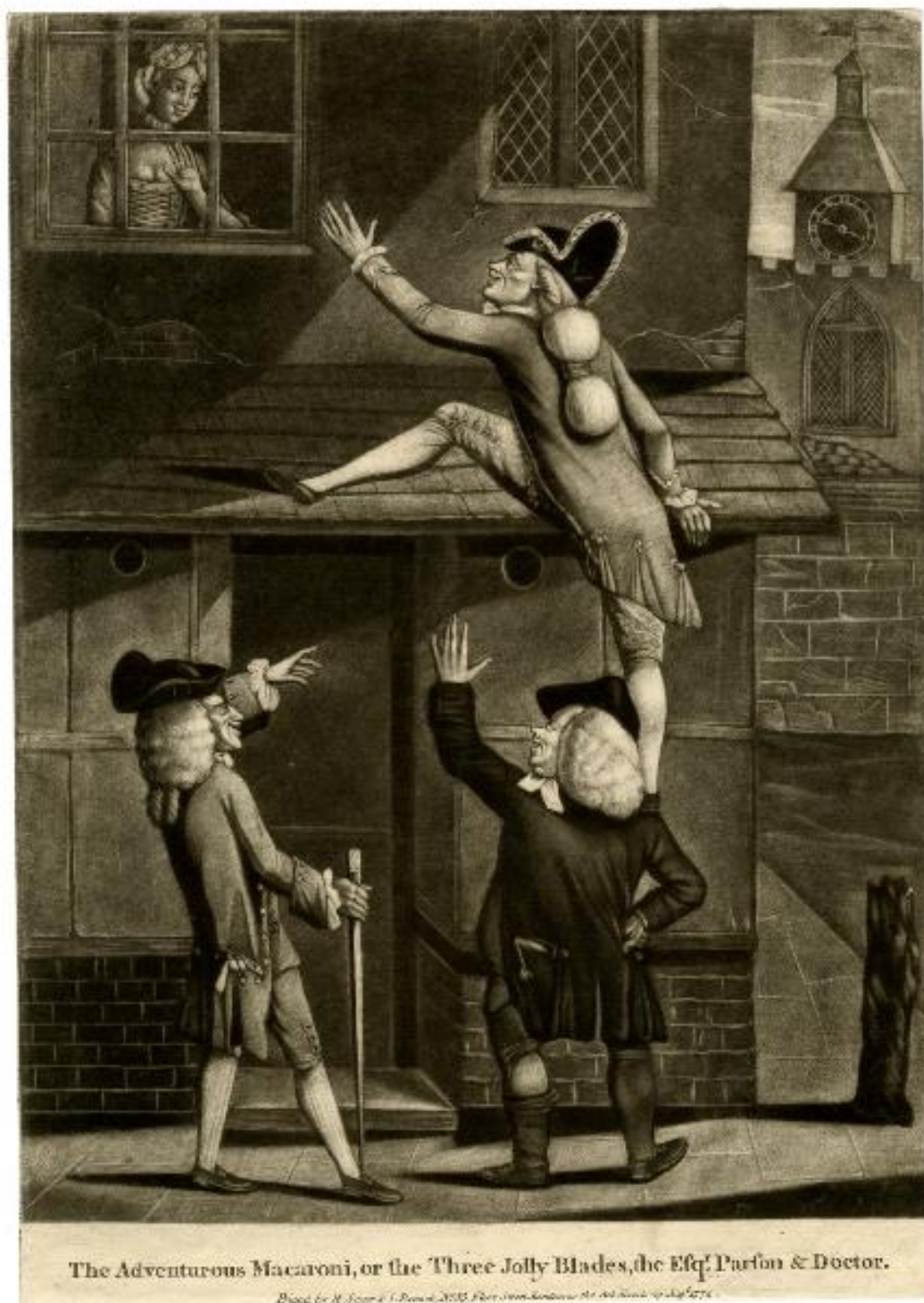


Figure 4.19

The Adventurous Macaroni, or the Three Jolly Blades, the Esqr. Parson & Doctor.
1774. Published by Sayer & Bennett. Mezzotint on paper, 357 x 254 mm. The British Museum, BM Satires 4618.

sexual dynamic, the macaroni therefore represents not one specific sexual identity; that is to say that the figure is not solely an expression of homosexuality, but rather comes to stand in as an example of unacceptable and failed masculine sexual identity, in whatever form that may be.

The docking caricatures, alongside those texts and prints which depicted violence and cuckoldry, I contend, speak to a much wider progression in attitudes towards deviant masculine identities such as the fop. Ridicule is no longer deemed a sufficient means of dealing with such characters. As *No.22 of The World* (May 31st, 1753) explains in detail, violence is perceived as the only adequate remedy to ensure the correction of such behaviours.

It may possibly be objected that our men-children are too big to be whipt like school-boys; but if the description be just, which I heard a gentleman at my father's give last holidays of our countrymen abroad, I leave you to judge whether they should or not. "Strolling over Europe (these were his words) and staring about them with a strange mixture of raw admiration and rude contempt; both equally the effects of ignorance and inexperience. Insolently despising foreign manners and customs, merely because they are foreign, which yet for the same reason they would fain copy, though awkwardly and without distinction. Untinctured with any sound principles of comparison; unreasonably vain, and; by turns, ashamed of their native country; trifling, sheepish and riotous." What are these, Mr. Fitz-Adam, but school-boys out of bounds? And shall they not be whipt, severely whipt when they return? It is beneath the dignity of government to inflict a more serious punishment, and contrary to its wisdom to connive at the offence.¹¹⁵

The tone of the letter is one of disgust and embarrassment. These types of behaviours, it suggests, impact upon the national reputation, and it is for this reason harsher consequences are deemed necessary to combat the macaroni's effeminacy. Through a focus on violence, these texts recognize the threat macaroni identities pose to the sexual norm, but simultaneously prove the figure to be no threat at all, as the macaronis are regularly beaten into submission.

¹¹⁵ Edward Moore, *The World. By Adam Fitz-Adam.*, vol. 1 (London: Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1753), 133.

The fop's metamorphosis in the latter half of the period, from an effeminate male to a genderless 'thing', places the figure within an economy of sexual identity. It challenges the figure's non-normative and fluid sexual and gender identity. By 'othering' the fop, critics of deviant masculinities were able to challenge the figure's acceptability. Rather than solely ridicule the figure, critics were able to launch stronger attacks on the figure and foppish proclivities more generally through the focus on their bodies. In presenting the macaroni's body as 'other', critics were able to not only verbally attack the validity of the foppish body but offer a physical attack as well.

Conclusion

The short-lived dominance of the term macaroni at this point in the century, therefore, speaks to concerns surrounding sexual identity. Whether presented as homosexual or not, the figure is given a sexual identity in a way that it previously had not been. These concerns come to be expressed in depictions of the macaroni as possessing ineffectual masculinity. The macaroni is presented as sexually and physically inadequate: his contraction of syphilis was perceived as evidence of him succumbing to the allure of French fashionability, a fashionability which rendered him not only effeminate but threatened the future posterity and safety of the nation as he imported foreign vices and diseases. Moreover, the portrayal of the military macaroni drew on the fop's association with Stuart identity to suggest the macaroni's fashionable excess. The macaroni's engagement in military activity was a fashionable performance that lacked masculine substance – it provided another example of the figure's excess and lack of control as the figure was unable to control his violent outbursts. Furthermore, the descriptions and depictions of violence enacted against the macaroni were a response to the macaroni's embodiment of foreign affectation and infection. The violent scenes were used to encourage and endorse the sentiment of revulsion at the type of effeminacy which the macaroni came to represent. Ultimately, all these concerns converge in the presentation of the macaroni as

‘unmanned’, or rather, genderless. The presentation of the macaroni in these terms shows a sharp departure from the fop, who while ridiculous is generally likeable. By utilizing the traits and tropes generally associated with the fop but applying them to a new character type under the title of macaroni, satirists were able to attack the figure in sharper and more vehement terms.

Conclusion

This thesis has tracked the ways in which the presentation of, and responses to, the fop altered throughout the long eighteenth century. It has revealed how the fop was repurposed as a literary device at different moments throughout the century to respond to specific social, cultural, and political moments. The figure came a long way from its original manifestation on the Restoration stage; fops like the affable and comic Lord Foppington, who conveyed courtly extravagance and foreign affectation, were eventually transformed into the still fashionable, but no longer likeable, figures such as Mr. Lovel, whose polite veneer was not enough to conceal his disagreeable personality. By tracing the development of the fop across the period, I have shown that while representations of and attitudes towards the fop changed, the figure's defining characteristics did not. Throughout the period the fop retained its identity as a figure embodying foolishness, vanity, frivolity, effeminacy, affectation and Frenchness. The stability of the fop's characteristics, I have argued, made the figure a useful literary tool for authors to explore questions of eighteenth-century identity and character.

The fop served as a cultural touchstone for a diverse range of debates throughout the long eighteenth century with the political and social controversies of the era impinging directly on the figure's representation and function in literary culture. Starting with an exploration of how foppishness characteristics were gendered as feminine, the thesis examined the largely overlooked figure of the female fop. I argued that the reason that the fop's female counterpart has remained unheeded by many scholars can be found in the gendered assumptions which have tended to ground studies of the figure. The fop's defining character lies not in the figure's gender or effeminization, but rather in its potential to function as an embodiment of foreign fashion, affectation, vanity and foolishness.

In light of this, the thesis has demonstrated that the fop was not an ephemeral figure of the Restoration. Instead, I have shown that the importance of the fop lies in the figure's ability to be applied to, and function as, a range of debates. On the Restoration stage, depictions of the fop responded to not only the court's penchant for foreign luxury, but also to a much more intense concern over Charles II's loyalty to the English nation – a concern that came to be expressed through a focus on fashion as a signifier of identity. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, authors used the fop as a popular medium through which to explore philosophical debates surrounding ideas of luxury consumption and identity. The popularization of politeness as an indicator of genteel identity raised questions over the role of luxury as a signifier of identity. While engagement with luxury was important to the construction of the polite gentleman, periodicalists used the example of the fop to warn against erroneous consumption. Periodicalists reinforced the notion of indisputable signifiers of gentility by presenting the fop's excessive consumption as evidence of his foolishness and lack of intellect.

Chapter four saw the thesis turn to a consideration of sexual identity. Focusing on the macaroni as a subsidiary version of the fop used to embody questions of sexual identity, the chapter addresses how effeminacy became tied up with notions of sexual identity in the later decades of the eighteenth century. I argue that the sexualization of foppish characteristics with the advent of the macaroni was a direct response to contemporary anxieties that France was using fashion to effeminate young British men in order to facilitate a French invasion of Britain.

While the popularity of other figures such as the nabob and the rake wavered over the course of the eighteenth century, the fop remained prominent because it remained relevant, not least as a tool for debating issues of national identity, character, and gender. The emphasis placed on the fop as a fashionable figure in part explains its extensive dissemination

and popularity: the fop was at once an attractive and enticing figure at the same time as having the potential to be subversive and controversial. The balance between the fop as someone affable and yet dangerous sustained public interest in the figure as a signifier of a diverse range of societal concerns. By focusing on the fop's stable characteristics, I have shown how it becomes possible to reassess both the figure's prominence throughout the eighteenth century, as well as the figure's continued relevance to contemporary debates.

The use of the fop as a character created by, and in response to, changing social and political conditions, however, started to fall out of fashion in the 1790s, though the figure would go on to have an afterlife as a stock trope in newspapers throughout the Romantic period. Plays written during the Restoration and eighteenth century continued to be performed and printed, providing the public with access to, and knowledge of, the figure. Nevertheless, few new fops were created and by the early 1800s commentators began to suggest that the fop no longer existed. In January 1811, an article titled 'The Coxcomb and the Fop' was published in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* in which a young woman called Mary convinces her father that fops are no longer relevant within society. Fops, Mary argues, are in decline, with very few extant:

A fop is now almost become an obsolete thing: the creature perished with all the paraphernalia of powder, pomatum, plack pins, wool, golden-clocked silk stocking, and read-heeled shoes. Where now do we see these fine bedizened animals?¹

The fop, Mary suggests, has become outdated, slowly being replaced by a new breed of coxcomb. Mary distinguishes between the type of fashionability embodied by the fop and what she identifies as the modern coxcomb:

¹ Anon, 'The Coxcomb and the Fop.', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine, or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge*, January 1811, pg. 17, British Periodicals Online (ProQuest), accessed 21 October 2019. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-periodicals/coxcom-fop/docview/5638739/se-2?accountid=12860>.

I thank you for furnishing me with a fop put of our own family, in order to demonstrate to you what the creature is, and his oppositeness to the finished coxcombs of the present day, otherwise called men of the first fashion!²

For Mary, the old breed of fops is exemplified by her cousin Benborough, a vain and effeminate individual who wears rouge, dresses to excess and displays a weak constitution. He is contrasted against Sir Thomas Speedham, a man of fashion who gambles and exhibits a preference for boxing over plays. While she is not exactly complimentary of either man, she does recognize the distinction between the older type of eighteenth-century fashionability and a newer brand which emphasizes notions of vulgarity, brazen masculinity and physical tendencies.

A few years later in April 1818, Sylvester Douglas, 1st Baron Glenbervie, a British lawyer, politician and diarist, reflects that the “term for a sort of fop is already worn out, so ephemeral are fashionable sobriquets”.³ Despite this thesis having demonstrated the longevity of the fop’s popularity as a literary tool throughout the eighteenth century, by the nineteenth century it seems that the fop was remembered as an ephemeral character. The figure had been replaced by other incarnations of fashionable masculinity and hence ceased to be a prominent cultural figure. While an in-depth consideration of why the fop fell from popularity at the end of the eighteenth century falls outside of the scope of this thesis, I conclude my study with a brief analysis positing the role of the French Revolution in the demise of the fop’s popularity, as well as suggesting that future scholarly attention to the figure of the dandy may help us better understand the fop’s cultural decline.

² Anon, 'The Coxcomb and the Fop', 18.

³ Sylvester Douglas Glenbervie, *The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas (Lord Glenbervie)*, ed. Francis Bickley, vol. 2 (London: Constable & Co., 1928), 303.

The French Revolution and the Fop's Decline

The fop's declining popularity can be, in part, ascribed to the outbreak of the French Revolution. It is well established that the outset of the French Revolution had a profound impact on eighteenth-century political, social, philosophical and cultural thought. Linda Colley contends that

By the time of Waterloo, a generation of patrician Britons had grown up for whom Continental Europe was more a cockpit for battle, and a landscape of revolutionary subversion, than a fashionable playground and cultural shrine. Out of necessity, therefore, as well as for reasons of prudence and patriotic choice, members of the ruling order were encouraged to seek out new forms of cultural expression that were unquestionably British. They remained as concerned as ever to stress what distinguished them from their lesser countrymen, but in ways now that were indigenous to themselves, not borrowed from abroad.⁴

As Colley shows, the British public throughout the eighteenth century had been conditioned to see France, and Europe more broadly, as their enemy. This view of France as a military threat was incompatible with the fop's embodiment of France as representative of the epitome of fashionability, or what Colley terms "a fashionable playground and cultural shrine".⁵ The historical trajectory that Colley identifies therefore of the increasing threat France posed to Britain, supports the progressively hardening attitudes that this thesis has shown developed in relation to the fop. In terms of the fop, this negative perception of France made the figure untenable, especially in the wake of the French Revolution and the period of prolonged war with France that followed. Within this highly politicized context, the fop's embodiment of foreign affectation was no longer sustainable.

This is most immediately evident in the arena of fashion. Concerns over the extravagance of French fashions took on new importance in the context of the French Revolution. This had ramifications for British fashion, with contemporaries attempting to

⁴ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, version 2nd rev. ed., 2nd rev. ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 169.

⁵ Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, 169.

foster a style wholly distinct from any association with France. As Aileen Riberiro has shown, the French Revolution made practical and plain clothing socially and politically necessary, making the fop's brand of French exaggerated fashionability unsustainable.⁶ Instead of elaborate styles, the cut of the fabric came to be of fundamental importance to a man's clothing. Fashion came to be signalled by how well made the clothing was, rather than how ostentatious it was.

Questions of fashionability thus remained prominent, and the debates the fop embodied about fashion, luxury and national identity did not disappear from public consciousness. For instance, Patrick Boyle's 1792 text *The Fashionable Court Guide* reveals the continued importance of fashion as an indicator of social and political value and provides readers with a "Directory of the TOWN-RESIDENCES of Persons of Quality and Fashion, alphabetically arranged in the most copious Manner".⁷ In 1804, Theophilus Christian Esq. [John Owens] wrote a political and religious diatribe against fashionable society, titled *The Fashionable World Displayed*, in which he argued that to be fashionable was to be irreligious. He concludes his attack with a call for the "PEOPLE of FASHION [to] become the PEOPLE of GOD".⁸ With the retention of interest in fashion as not only a signifier of identity, but as a complex issue of social and political weight, the absence of the fop left room for a new figure – the dandy – to take its place as a touchstone for exploration of these attendant issues.

The association of fashion with French, and especially revolutionary, politics – which now threatened the sanctity of the monarchy alongside practical considerations of wartime

⁶ Aileen Riberiro, 'Fashioning Georgian Society', in *York Georgian Society Lecture* (York, 2019).

⁷ Patrick Boyle, *The Fashionable Court Guide, or the Town Visit Directory, for the Year 1792. By P. Boyle. To Be Continued Annually*. (London: printed for the proprietor; and sold by Mess. Hookham and Carpenter; Wells, Grosvenor, and Chetters., 1792), v–vi.

⁸ John Owen, *The Fashionable World Displayed. By the Rev. John Owen, A. M. Late Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and Rector of Paglesham, Essex.*, Eighth Edition (London: Printed for L. B. Seeley, Fleet Street., 1817), 154.

trade – meant that the importation and admiration of French fashions declined. As the adoption of French fashion became even more highly politicized and criticized, the fop's relevance as a figure of cultural, political and social significance waned. Representations of the fop had always retained a semblance of comedy, despite the harsh criticism the figure increasingly faced. Thus, the conditions of the French Revolution, with their very real threat of violence to Britain and its monarchic and social institutions, made the fop an increasingly alien figure. This was not because the issues that the fop embodied were no longer pertinent, but rather because the fop ceased to be a suitable vehicle for the discussion of national concerns regarding British identity.

The Dandy

Scholars have suggested the dandy to be the natural successor of the fop. Andrew Williams observes that:

Soon after the end of the eighteenth-century, the vanity, excessive attention to dress, and preoccupation with social forms which signalled the comic ridicule of the Restoration stage fop became fundamental to the identity of the “dandy” whose code of social conduct strongly influenced early nineteenth-century London society.⁹

The dandy, Williams suggests, embodies the same concerns as the fop but is a specifically nineteenth-century phenomenon. John Tosh also draws attention to the similarities between the fop and the dandy, declaring the dandy a “man who lived for appearances”.¹⁰

While undoubtably a figure of fashionability akin to the fop, the dandy nevertheless deviates in significant ways from the fop. First and foremost, the dandy is an aesthetic ideal, as Rhonda K. Garelick explains:

⁹ Andrew P. Williams, *The Restoration Fop: Gender Boundaries and Comic Characterization in Later Seventeenth Century Drama* (Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen, 1995), 180.

¹⁰ John Tosh, ‘Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 455.

Dandyism is itself a performance, the performance of a highly stylized, painstakingly constructed self, a solipsistic social icon. Both the early social dandyism of England and the later, more philosophical French incarnations of the movement announced and glorified a self-created, carefully controlled man whose goal was to create an effect, bring about an event, or provoke reaction in others through the suppression of the "natural". Artful manipulation of posture, social skill, manners, conversation, and dress were all accoutrements in the aestheticization of self central to dandyism.¹¹

The dandy therefore is about fashionable control, an “attempt to reconquer, by simplicity, cleanliness and cut, the social distance lost by the adoption of common male dress”.¹² In contrast, the fop exhibited a total lack of control, representing an identity overwhelmed by fashion, rather than a figure who possessed the ability to carefully curate and skilful manipulate their identity through fashion.

Despite this important distinction, the dandy still resembled the fop in many ways, and tropes first established on the Restoration stage were repurposed in theatrical depictions of the dandy. For instance, the Drury Lane pantomime for the 1818-1819 season, *Harlequin and the Dandy Club; or, 1818*, opens with a dressing room scene in which a number of dandies are depicted getting dressed with the help of a tailor, shoemaker, and stay-maker.¹³ The dandy’s fashionability then, was in some senses similar to that of the fop. This sentiment is captured in the epilogue to the 1818 play *Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin*:

France gave his step its trip, his tongue its phrase
His head its peruke, and his waist its stays!
The thing is contraband. – Let’s crush the trade,
Ladies insist on’t – *all* is best *home-made* –
All British, from your shoe-tie or your fan,
Down to that tantalizing wretch – call’d man!
Now for the compound creature – first, the wig,
With every frizzle struggling to look big;
On the roug’d-cheek the fresh dyed whisker spread,
The thousandth way of dressing a calf’s head.

¹¹ Rhonda K. Garelick, *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siècle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3.

¹² Philip Mansel, *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 76.

¹³ *Harlequin and the Dandy Club; or, 1818* (Available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough, Eighteenth Century Drama., 1818); For information on the reception of the pantomime see: *The European Magazine, and London Review. Philological Society (Great Britain).*, vol. 75 (London : Printed for James Asperne, at the Bible, Crown, and Constitution, No. 32, Cornhill., 1819), 48.

The neckcloth next, where starch and whalebone vie
To make the slave a walking pillory.
The bolster'd bosom – ah! Ye envying fair
How little dream you of the stuff that's there!
What straps, ropes, steel, the aching ribs compress,
To make the Dandy “beautifully less.”¹⁴

The author satirizes the dandy by revealing the ways in which this new figure of fashionability is in many ways similar to and indebted to the earlier figure of fashion, the fop. While there is an emphasis on British and “home-made” items, there is nevertheless a sense of excess in the dandy's representation. But the dandy's is an excess which at the surface, at least, appears simple, a style which while requiring a complex engagement with fashion appears “beautifully less”. The dandy therefore was equally flamboyant in his own way, but he was distinguished by the appearance of simplicity in his style. The figure's reserved style spoke to London's resurgence as an epicentre for men's tailoring as Savile Row became the place for nineteenth-century men to obtain their suits.¹⁵ The dandy's aestheticism, therefore, along with the figure's promotion of a simplicity aligned with English notions of fashionability, made the figure less comical than his predecessor. As a figure embodying an aesthetic ideal, rather than one constructed to serve as a medium through which to enact debates on issues of national identity, fashionability and vanity, the dandy did not seem to possess the same political valency as the fop. More work is, however, needed to unpick the tensions between these two similarly fashion-conscious, yet otherwise distinct, figures.

In summary, this thesis has explored the prevalence of the fop throughout the years from 1660 to 1789. In doing so it has been demonstrated that the fop was not an ephemeral figure of significance limited only to the Restoration, but rather that it embodied a complex web of characteristics, used at different times, and in different ways, to explore notions of

¹⁴ John Howard Payne Esq., ‘Brutus; or, The Fall of Tarquin: An Historical Tragedy, in Five Acts.’, in *Cumberland's British Theatre, with Remarks, Biographical and Critical. Printed from the Acting Copies, as Performed at the Theatre-Royal, London.*, vol. 11 (London: Printed for John Cumberland, 19, Ludgate Hill., 1826), 51–52.

¹⁵ Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*, 76.

national identity, legitimacy, gender, fashionability and consumption throughout the course of the long eighteenth century. More research needs to be undertaken to address why the fop lost its cultural resonance even while its embodied concerns remained prevalent into the nineteenth century. Questions remain about the ways in which the fop informed and influenced later models of identity, particularly with reference to the dandy. There is room to challenge the neat narrative that the fop did not disappear from popularity but was simply given a new name and subsumed into the figure of the dandy. Additionally, in this study I have used the pronouns 'he', 'she' and 'it' to refer to the fop. This registers the instability of the figure's identity, and challenges critical studies that have seen the figure as specifically male. Rather, the fop seems to have been more an object than an individual, one whose status as something 'other' revealed much about social codes and behaviours in an increasingly polite Britain. Exploration of the slippage between pronouns in depictions of fops therefore warrants more specific consideration. In particular, the study of 'Thing Theory' in relation to the fop, might offer interesting implications for understanding the fop as an expression of concerns surrounding identity and character.¹⁶ For the fop's importance as a character often lay not with the figure itself, but with its relation to the human subject and the representation of wider concerns.

¹⁶ For more information of 'Thing Theory' see: Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

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